

**THE NEW TESTAMENT:
AN UNDERSTANDABLE VERSION**

THE NEW TESTAMENT: AN UNDERSTANDABLE VERSION

By William E. Paul

This version of the New Testament was produced by consulting several Greek-English interlinear texts, a large number of English translations, and then confirming the meaning of each word from exegetical commentaries. Its purpose was to enhance the personal understanding and spiritual devotion of its publisher, his family members and those persons especially interested in Bible versions.

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DEDICATION

To

**Bennie, Terry, Tim, Sheila, Billy and Dan
and their children**

"understand what the Lord wants you to do" Eph. 5:17

LIMITED EDITION

This edition is limited to 300 copies.

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Why use the term "*understandable*" in describing this version? Are not all Bible versions understandable? Well, they certainly are to the ones who produced them! And that is the very purpose for this one. The term "understandable" simply means that the words used are familiar to Bill Paul and convey what he believes the inspired writers were saying. Notice the title includes the word "**an**," also. That means there are certainly many other understandable versions, but this one happens to express meaning in a way that offers maximum understanding to the one who produced it. In other words, of the many understandable versions available, **this one** says it best...for me!

WHY ANOTHER ONE?

Probably the most frequently asked question by those who pick up a new version is, "What? **Another** version of the New Testament?" Akin to that one is the question, "Is there really **a need** for another one?" I guess I would have to answer, "I wanted a better understanding of the New Testament and this seemed the best way to acquire it." You see, the reason for this version is that it fills a need. It afforded me the opportunity of taking a more serious and detailed look at each verse of the New Testament writings with a view to seeing what it actually said and meant. But, could not that have been done by reading one of the approximately 300 English translations in my personal collection? Yes, and no! A number of them **were** read, and **still** not every verse or passage resulted in a clear understanding. (Probably because I, like you, read *over* some verses and thereby miss the meaning). So, the decision was made to attempt making a **personal** version, intended to provide me with a better understanding of the New Testament Scriptures.

This version may be unique in that it does not guarantee to be **exactly** what the Holy Spirit inspired the original writers to record.

Instead, this work represents only **what** I *understand* those writers to be saying. There is a difference. Since this version is intended principally for personal use, it should be kept in mind, in the likely event that it falls into other hands, this is what Bill Paul *understood* the writers to be saying. Many Bible versions are said to be "better," "closer," "easier," "simpler," "clearer," or "plainer" renditions of the original, inspired (Greek) documents. No such claim is being made for this one. I am not saying that **everyone else** must accept this version as "the most accurate one." I, more than anyone else, am aware of its weaknesses. And yes, you may possibly find some deficiencies in its clarity of expression, in its use of proper wording, and especially in its interpretative portions. In a work of this magnitude, done by a person with limited abilities, this is inevitable. So, if you feel led to offer advice or suggestions, they would be most welcome.

The time spent working on the basic translation of this version consisted of several hours a day for twenty-three months. During that time I produced an average of twelve verses per day. However, the additional hours spent in the planning, layout, proof reading, typing, retyping, rereading and making the final corrections extended the project for another five months.

The experience of working on this version proved a special blessing. The insights gained in the process of trying to determine what each word, sentence and verse meant were very enlightening. Even though I had read the entire Bible from several translations (and the New Testament from even more), this endeavor has proven to be more rewarding than any previous reading of the New Testament.

HOW WAS IT DONE?

The rendering of each New Testament verse involved reading and studying it at least five times. It was first written out in long hand in spiral notebooks after the sources mentioned below were carefully consulted. Then, it was reviewed for proper syntax and style as it was being typed into the computer. Next, the computer printouts were reread carefully (three times), and numerous corrections and changes in wording were made each time before the final draft was placed computer and appeared in its present form. I am deeply indebted to my dear wife, Bethel, for reading much of the manuscript carefully,

and suggesting numerous ways to improve the clarity and wording of many passages.

In the course of producing this version, as many as thirty English translations were constantly consulted, especially on difficult words and sentences, and some of the readings from those that provided the clearest *understanding* were selected and used. Especially useful was The Translator's New Testament, prepared by the British and Foreign Bible Society for use by those preparing a version from the English language instead of directly from the Greek only.

This version was not rendered from a Greek text *only* for two reasons: [1] While I am familiar with New Testament Greek, having studied it in college, I do not consider myself an **authority** in the Greek language. (However, I did constantly consult the Nestle-Aland, 26th corrected edition (1986) Greek text, and the United Bible Societies, 4th corrected edition (1993) Greek text, with their English interlinear readings, among the original language reference works utilized). [2] The fact that I have also utilized so many English translations, most of which were made by highly competent Greek scholars, afforded me access to the studied conclusions of capable and experienced people in the field of Bible translation. (The cumulative number of years of New Testament Greek scholarship consulted would easily be in the hundreds). So, this version involved a considerable amount of evaluation and utilization of some of the English words used in the various New Testament translations which appeared to me to be the most *understandable*, and which best conveyed the meaning of the Greek text. However, in many cases, the wording I used was not found in any of the translations consulted. And, of course, the final choice of words, carefully selected and utilized, rests squarely upon me and I assume full responsibility for the rendition of every verse.

Also, throughout the work, the words eventually chosen were determined only after a constant examination of commentaries and atlases which were carefully studied to determine proper antecedents and to confirm historical, geographical, cultural, circumstantial and theological details. (A list of over 120 reference works used in the preparation of this work is available on request).

The words or phrases in brackets ([]) are entirely mine and do *not* generally contain words found in any other text. Instead, they

are inserted for the following four reasons: [1] To clarify the meaning of a sentence. For example "He went to the city [of Jerusalem]." The words "of Jerusalem" are not in any Greek text but helped me to keep the sense of the narrative in clearer perspective. These insertions generally do not interrupt the flow of the sentence. [2] To explain a word or phrase. In doing this the letters "i.e." (meaning "that is") are used. For example "he was a Pharisee [i.e. a strict sect of the Jewish religion]." These insertions tend to interrupt the flow of the sentence, but seemed worthwhile to me since they explain a word or phrase and thereby enhanced the meaning of the passage. [3] To provide information of a geographical, historical or cultural nature. These insertions are always introduced by the word "[Note]" and appear in reduced type size. They definitely interrupt the flow of the sentence and even the thought. But they are felt to be very helpful in gaining a better *understanding* of the passage. (Many translations place such items in the footnotes, but here they are placed within the text so as to insure a greater likelihood of being read). An example of this use of brackets follows the passage in Matthew 5:13, where it says that salt was "good for nothing except to be thrown out into the roadway and walked on by people [Note: This was mined salt which, when losing its 'saltiness' due to exposure to the sun or rain, was simply disposed of by being dumped onto the roadway where people walked]." Also, an occasional "Note" will include a brief explanation of the foregoing verse when it seemed helpful in understanding the passage better. Such "notes" are admittedly interpretive. [4] Brackets are frequently used to inclose words supplied to complete a sentence. These words usually do not have counterparts in the original Greek text and are used somewhat like the italics of the New American Standard Version. Sometimes they take the form of inserting an ellipsis, for added clarity. For example, "they say [the right things], but do not do them." The words "the right things" are not found in any Greek text, but I add them, in brackets, to complete the idea of the sentence. So, because of such extensive use of brackets, it would be better if this version were approached as a tool for careful study rather than being read aloud or as devotional reading. The bracketed material designated by the use of "[Note:]" may be skipped if the reader wishes to have a smoother reading of the text and avoid rambling sentences.

A liberty taken in this version is the substitution of common or proper nouns for pronouns in many instances. For example, if the text actually says, "They came..." or "He said...", this version may substitute "Jesus and the apostles came..." or "The Pharisee said...." This is felt to be especially helpful in clearly identifying to whom the nearest antecedent pronoun refers and is done in the interest of making the narrative or description of the event more *understandable*.

Another element that is utilized is the substitution of a different word for the conjunction "And" when it appears at the beginning of a sentence. It seems the Greek uses "And" to start a sentence far more frequently than is customary in current English usage. For this reason, many translations simply drop the "And," considering it a redundancy. In this version such an "And," when used as the first word of the sentence, is often rendered "Then," "But," "Now," "So," or just dropped altogether. This liberty is taken only when such words appear **not** to alter the sense of the passage in any way and was done for the purpose of enhancing the *understanding*.

Finally, considerable care was given in an attempt to express the exact meaning of each word, verse, sentence and passage with a minimal amount of paraphrasing. Remember, a primary objective has been to make it *understandable*, while at the same time remaining as **true** to the best Greek manuscripts as I was capable of producing.

SHOULD YOU READ ON?

If this version were intended for Bill Paul, then why should you be reading it? Good question. You really do not **need** to in order to understand and obey the teaching of the New Testament. But, since it has obviously fallen into your hands, you may want to read it alongside a standard translation for whatever helpful ideas, insights or understanding it may afford you.

In any event, here it is --- in your hands. Should you choose to read on, may you find the experience worthy of the effort. And if your reading of it proves to be only a fraction of the blessing it was to me, during the preparation of it, then a valuable reward awaits you.

---William E. Paul

MATTHEW

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This is] a record of the family background of Jesus Christ, the descendant of David, who was the descendant of Abraham. [Note: The following is an incomplete lineage through Jesus' step-father Joseph].

2) Abraham had a son named Isaac; Isaac had a son named Jacob and Jacob's sons were Judah and his [eleven] brothers. 3) Judah had sons named Perez and Zarah, [whose mother was] Tamar. Perez had a son named Hezron; Hezron had a son named Aram; 4) Aram had a son named Amminadab; Amminadab had a son named Nahshon; Nahshon had a son named Salmon; 5) Salmon had a son named Boaz [whose mother was] Rahab; Boaz had a son named Obed [whose mother was] Ruth; Obed had a son named Jesse, 6) and Jesse had a son named David [who became] king [of Israel].

David had a son named Solomon [whose mother was Bathsheba, the wife] of Uriah; 7) Solomon had a son named Rehoboam; Rehoboam had a son named Abijah; Abijah had a son named Asa; 8) Asa had a son named Jehoshaphat; Jehoshaphat had a son named Joram; Joram had a son named Uzziah; 9) Uzziah had a descendant named Jotham; Jotham had a son named Ahaz; Ahaz had a son named Hezekiah; 10) Hezekiah had a son named Manasseh; Manasseh had a son named Amon; Amon had a son named Josiah; 11) Josiah had descendants named Jechoniah and his brothers, [near] the time when [the people of Judah] were taken away to Babylon.

12) After the people [of Judah] were taken away to Babylon, Jeconiah had a son named Shealtiel; Shealtiel had a son named Zerubbabel; 13) Zerubbabel had a son named Abiud; Abiud had a son named Eliakim; Eliakim had a son named Azor; 14) Azor had a son named Sadoc; Sadoc had a son named Achim; Achim had a son named Eliud; 15) Eliud had a son named Eleazar; Eleazar had a son named Matthan; Matthan had a son named Jacob; 16) Jacob had a son named Joseph, who was the husband of Mary. Mary [alone] was the mother of Jesus, who is called the Christ.

17) So, all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen; from [the time of] King David to the people [of Judah] being taken away to Babylon were [approximately] fourteen

generations and from [Judah] being taken away to Babylon to [the time of] Christ were [approximately] fourteen generations.

18) Now the birth of Christ happened this way: When His mother Mary was engaged to marry Joseph, [but] before they had a sexual relationship, she was discovered to be pregnant by [the power of] the Holy Spirit. 19) Now Joseph, her husband [to be], being a man who did what was right, and not wanting to make a public spectacle out of her, decided to break off their engagement privately.

20) But while he was thinking about the matter, [suddenly] an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream [i.e., a supernatural revelation given during sleep], saying, "Joseph, you descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife, for the baby she is carrying is by [the power of] the Holy Spirit. 21) She is going to have a son and you should name Him Jesus, for He is the One who will save His people from their sins."

22) Now all this happened in order to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet [Isaiah 7:14], saying, 23) "Look, the virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and they will name Him Immanuel," which means "God with us."

24) Then Joseph woke up from his sleep and did what the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary to be his wife. 25) [But] he did not have sexual relations with her until [after] she had a son, whom he named Jesus.

CHAPTER TWO

1) Now Jesus was born in Bethlehem [a small town] in Judea during the time when Herod [the Great] was king [of Judea]. About that time some astrologer/sages from the east [i.e., Persia] came to Jerusalem, saying, 2) "Where is the one who was born to be king of the Jews? For we saw a star [signifying his birth while we were still] in the east, and have come here to worship him."

3) And when King Herod heard this, he and the entire city of Jerusalem were [very] upset. 4) So, he gathered all the leading priests and experts in the law of Moses from among the people and asked them where the Christ [child] was to be born. 5) They replied to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what was written by the prophet [Micah 5:2], 6) 'And you, Bethlehem in the country of Judah, are not

among the least [towns in furnishing] rulers for Judah, for you will produce a leader who will become shepherd of my [i.e., God's] people Israel."

7) Then Herod summoned the astrologer/sages and learned from them exactly when the star had appeared. 8) So, he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and find out the details about the young child, and when you have found him, come and tell me, so I can go and worship him myself."

9) After hearing the king they left and the star, which they had seen [while still] in the east, moved on ahead of them until it stopped over [the house] where the young child was staying. [See verse 11]. 10) And when they saw the star, they were extremely happy. 11) Then they went into the house and saw the young child with His mother Mary. They fell to the ground and worshiped Him, and unpacking their treasures, they offered Him gifts of gold, incense and aromatic spices. 12) Then they were warned by God in a [supernatural] dream not to return to Herod, so they left and returned to their own country by a different route.

13) Now when they had gone an angel from the Lord appeared to Joseph in a [supernatural] dream, saying, "Get up and take the young child and His mother and hurry to Egypt. Stay there for as long as I tell you to, for Herod will be looking for the young child in order to kill Him."

14) So he got up, took the young child and His mother at night and went to Egypt. 15) They stayed there until Herod died, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled, saying [Hosea 11:1], "I [i.e., God] called my Son out of Egypt."

16) When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the astrologer/sages, he was furious and sent out [his soldiers] to kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity. This was done to those from two years old and under, basing [their decision] on the exact time determined from the astrologer/sages. 17) This fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 18) [Jer. 31:15], "A voice was heard in [the town of] Ramah [Note: This was a village near Jerusalem, where Rachel was buried], with crying and deep mourning. It was Rachel crying for her children [Note: Initially this was a reference to the Israelites who were taken to Babylonian captivity. See Jer. 29-31]. She refused to be comforted because they were dead."

19) Then when Herod was dead, an angel from the Lord appeared in a [supernatural] dream to Joseph [while he was still] in Egypt, saying, 20) "Get up, take the young child and His mother, and go [back] to the country of Israel, for those who had tried to take the young child's life are [now] dead."

21) So he got up, took the young child and His mother and went [back] to the country of Israel. 22) But when he heard that Archelaus was then the king of Judea, in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back. Then, being warned by God in a [supernatural] dream, he went on up to the region called Galilee, 23) and settled in a town called Nazareth, so that it could fulfill what was spoken by the prophets [Isa. 40:1?] that Jesus would be called a Nazarene.

CHAPTER THREE (Thirty years later)

1) In those days, John the Immerser went into the desert of Judea preaching [to Jews], saying, 2) "You must repent [i.e., change your hearts and lives], for the kingdom of heaven will soon be here." 3) For this is the man who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, who said, [Isa. 40:3], "[It is] the voice of a man who speaks out in the desert, [urging people to] make the road for the Lord ready [for Him to travel]; to make a straight pathway for Him [to walk on]."

4) Now John dressed in clothing made of camel's hair and he wore a leather belt around his waist; he ate grasshoppers and wild honey [i.e., for his regular diet]. 5) [People from] Jerusalem and all over Judea and the region around the Jordan River all went out [to the desert] to [hear] him, 6) and people were immersed by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins.

7) But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to be immersed, John said to them, "You children of snakes, who warned you to run away from the coming wrath [of God]? 8) Demonstrate by your lives that you have [really] repented, 9) and quit thinking to yourselves, we claim Abraham as our forefather, because I tell you, God is able to make Abraham's children out of these stones. 10) And even now the axe is ready to chop down the trees [i.e., you Jewish people]. Every tree [i.e., person] that does not produce wholesome fruit [i.e., godly, repentant lives] will be cut down and thrown into the fire [i.e., the final punishment of the wicked]."

11) "I certainly am immersing you in water following [your] repentance, but the One who follows my [ministry], whose sandals I do not deserve to remove [as His slave], will immerse you people with the Holy Spirit and with fire [i.e., the punishment in hell. See verses 10 and 12]. 12) His winnowing shovel [Note: This was a process whereby grain was tossed into the air so that the wind could blow the husks away, leaving only good grain on the ground] is in His hand and He will completely clear off His threshing floor [by removing all of the husks]. And He will gather His wheat into the barn, but will burn up the husks with a fire that will never go out."

13) Jesus then came from [the province of] Galilee to be immersed by John in the Jordan River. 14) But John tried to discourage Him [from being immersed], saying, "I should be immersed by you, and you are coming to me [for immersion]?" 15) But Jesus answered him, "Allow it [to be done], for it is proper for us to complete everything that is right [before God]." So, John agreed to it.

16) After Jesus was immersed [by John], He came up out of the water and heaven was opened up before Him and He saw the Holy Spirit from God descending, as a dove, and landing upon Him. 17) Then a voice came out of heaven, saying, "This is my dearly loved Son. I am very pleased with Him."

CHAPTER FOUR

1) Then Jesus was led up to the desert by the Holy Spirit in order to be put to the test by the devil. 2) After He had fasted forty days and nights, He was [very] hungry. 3) The tempter [i.e., the devil] came and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to turn into bread." 4) But Jesus answered, "It is written [Deut. 8:3], 'A person is not to live by [eating] bread only, but [instead] by [believing and obeying] every statement spoken by God.'"

5) Then the devil took Him to the holy city [i.e., Jerusalem] and placed Him on an [elevated] wing of the Temple, 6) and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God jump off, for it is written [Psalm 91:11-12]: 'He will put His angels in charge of you' and 'They will lift you up with their hands so you do not trip over a stone.'" 7) Jesus said to him, "It is also written [Deut. 6:16], 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8) The devil took Him again, [this time] to a very high mountain and showed Him all the world's kingdoms, along with their splendor, 9) and said to Him, "I will give you all these things if you fall to the ground and worship me." 10) Then Jesus replied to him, "Get away from me Satan, for it is written [Deut. 6:13], 'You are supposed to worship the Lord your God, and serve only Him.'"

11) Then the devil left Him and angels came and tended to His needs [i.e., food, water, etc.].

12) Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, He left [the province of Judea] and went to Galilee. 13) [After] leaving Nazareth [i.e., a major town in Galilee], He came to live in Capernaum, [a city] beside Lake Galilee, near the districts of Zebulun and Naphtali. 14) [This was] so that what Isaiah the prophet had spoken would be fulfilled, saying, 15) [Isa. 9:1-2] "The districts of Zebulun and Naphtali, near the lake, beyond [i.e., where it enters] the Jordan in Galilee, [the territory] of the Gentiles; 16) the people who lived [there] in [spiritual] darkness saw a great light. Light shone upon these people, who lived in an area that was under the shadow of death."

17) From that time onward Jesus began to preach, saying, "You people [must] repent [i.e., change your hearts and lives], for the kingdom of heaven is near."

18) While Jesus was walking beside Lake Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting their net into the lake, because they were fishermen. 19) And He said to them, "Come with me, and I will make you fishermen for people." 20) They immediately left their nets and went with Him.

21) [As] Jesus went from there He saw two [other] brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in the boat with their father Zebedee, repairing their nets. He called them, 22) and immediately they left their boat and their father and went with Him.

23) Jesus went all over Galilee teaching in the [Jewish] synagogues and preaching the good news of the [coming, see verse 17] kingdom, and healing all kinds of disease and sickness among the people. 24) The news [of what Jesus was doing] spread all over [the country of] Syria and they brought to Him all those who were sick, stricken with various diseases and pains, dominated by evil spirits, and afflicted with seizures and paralysis, and He healed them [all]. 25) Large crowds followed Him from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem,

Judea and from beyond [i.e., the east side of] the Jordan River.

CHAPTER FIVE

1) Seeing the large crowds, Jesus went up in a mountain [i.e., probably a hill near Capernaum] and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2) He opened His mouth and taught them, saying,

3) "Those persons who feel a deep sense of their personal need are blessed because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

4) "Those persons who feel grief [over their sins] are blessed because they will receive comfort [from God when they repent].

5) "Those persons who have a humble attitude [toward themselves] are blessed because they will inherit [the best of] the earth.

6) "Those persons who have an appetite for whatever is right will be blessed because they will be satisfied.

7) "Those persons who show mercy [toward others] will be blessed because they will be shown mercy [themselves].

8) "Those persons whose hearts are pure [before God] will be blessed because they will see God.

9) "Those persons who attempt to make peace [between people] will be blessed because they will be called God's children.

10) "Those persons who have suffered for trying to do what is right will be blessed because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them. 11) You will be blessed when people speak against you and harm you and say bad things about you that are untrue, because of [your devotion to] me. 12) Be happy and very glad, for your reward in heaven will be great. For they persecuted the prophets [who lived] before you in the same way.

13) "You people are [like] salt on the earth. But if salt loses its flavoring ability, how will it ever get it back again? From then on it would be good for nothing except to be thrown out onto the roadway and walked on by people. [Note: This was mined salt which, when losing its "saltiness" due to exposure to the sun or rain, was simply disposed of by being dumped onto the roadway where people walked]. 14) You people are [like] light in the world. A city built on a hill will not go unnoticed. 15) Neither does a person light an [olive oil] lamp and place it under a bushel-sized container, but on a stand where it can illuminate everything in the house. 16) In that same way, you should allow your light [i.e.,

influence] to shine in front of people, so that they will see your good deeds and [be led to] honor your Father in heaven.

17) "Do not think that I came to do away with the law of Moses or the prophets. I did not come to do away with them, but to fulfill them [i.e., their requirements and predictions]. 18) For it is true when I say, not one little letter or even a portion of a letter will be removed from the law of Moses until everything is accomplished [that is required by them]. [When that happens, then] heaven and earth will pass away [i.e., be destroyed. See II Peter 3:12]. 19) Therefore, whoever disregards one of these least [significant] requirements [of the law of Moses] and teaches others to [disregard them], he will be considered the least [significant person] in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys them and teaches [others to obey] them, will be considered important in the kingdom of heaven. 20) For I say to you people, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven unless what you do that is right excels what the experts in the law of Moses and the Pharisees [i.e., a strict sect of the Jewish religion] do that is right.

21) "You have heard what was said to the people in time's past [Exodus 20:13], 'You must not murder,' and whoever does will be subject to judgment. 22) But I say to you that every person who is angry toward his brother will be subject to judgment; and whoever calls his brother 'stupid idiot' is subject to [being sentenced by] the [Jewish] Council, and whoever says, 'go to hell' is subject to going to the fire of hell [himself]. 23) Therefore, if you are offering your [sacrificial] gift on the Altar and [just then] you remember that your brother has a grievance against you, 24) [stop right there]; leave your gift at the Altar and [immediately] go to that brother and settle the matter first, before returning to offer your gift. 25) [In another case], come to terms with the person suing you as soon as possible, [even] on your way [to court], so he does not take you before the judge, and then the judge turn you over to the officer and you be sent to prison. 26) It is true when I say to you, you will not be released from there until you have paid the last coin. [Note: The coin mentioned here amounted to about ten minutes' worth of a farm laborer's pay, or a little over one dollar in 1994].

27) "You have heard what was said [Exodus 20:14], 'You must not be sexually unfaithful to your mate.' 28) But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with an improper sexual desire for her [body], has already been sexually unfaithful to his mate in his

heart. **29)** And if your right eye is what ensnares you into falling away [from God], gouge it out and throw it away from you. For it would be better for you to lose a part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. [Note: This is the word "Gehenna," and because of its Old Testament connotation of burning bodies, II Chron. 33:6, it is used figuratively here, and elsewhere, to describe the place of future, final punishment of the wicked]. **30)** And if your right hand is what ensnares you into falling away [from God], cut it off and throw it away from you. For it would be better for you to lose a part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. **31)** It was also said [Deut. 24:1-3], 'Whoever divorces his wife, let it be done with a [legally binding] divorce decree, which he must give her.' **32)** But I say to you, every person who divorces his wife makes her become sexually unfaithful to him [i.e., since she will probably marry someone else], unless the reason for the divorce is that she had [already] become sexually unfaithful to him. And whoever marries a woman who has been divorced commits sexual sin with her [i.e., because she is still rightfully married to her first husband].

33) "Again, you have heard what was said to people in time's past [Lev. 19:12], 'You must not go back on your oaths, but [rather] fulfill the oaths you take to the Lord.' **34)** But I say to you, do not take any oath, [saying] 'by heaven,' for it is God's throne; **35)** nor 'by earth,' for it is the footstool for His feet; nor 'by Jerusalem,' for it is the city of the great King [i.e., God]. **36)** You should not take an oath, [saying] 'by my head,' for you cannot make a single hair white or black. **37)** But you should just say 'yes' [when you mean] yes, and 'no' [when you mean] no. Whatever you say beyond these [i.e., enforcing them by oaths], is of the evil one [i.e., the devil].

38) "You have heard what was said [Exodus 21:24], 'Take an eye [from someone] if he takes yours, and take a tooth [from someone] if he takes yours.' **39)** But I tell you, do not offer resistance to an evil person, but whoever hits you on the right side of the face, allow him [to hit you] on the other side also. **40)** And if anyone takes you to court in order to take your shirt away from you, let him have your coat also [i.e., if he insists on it]. **41)** Whoever requires you to go one mile, [be willing to] go with him two miles. [Note: The Romans were permitted by law to require a Jew to carry their burden for one mile only]. **42)** Give to the person who asks you [for something], and do not refuse to lend to the person who wants to borrow something from you.

43) "You have heard what was said [Lev. 19:18], 'You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44) But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45) in order to be [true] children of your Father in heaven, for He makes His sun to rise on evil [as well] as on good people. He [also] sends rain on those who live right [as well] as on those who do not live right. 46) For if you love [only] those who love you, what reward will you get for that? Do not even the publicans [Note: These were people with a bad reputation for their dishonest tax collecting activities] do that much? 47) And if you greet [cordially] your brothers only, what are you doing more than other people? Do not even the [unconverted] Gentiles do that much? 48) Therefore, you must [attempt to] be complete, just as your heavenly Father is [already] complete.

CHAPTER SIX

1) "Be careful that you do not do your good deeds in front of people for the purpose of being seen by them, for [if you do] you will not have a reward from your Father in heaven.

2) "Therefore, when you give money to help poor people, do not blow a trumpet in front of you [i.e., to call attention to it] as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and streets. They do this in order to win praise from people. It is true when I say to you, they have [already] received their reward. 3) But when you give money to help poor people, do not allow your left hand to know what your right hand is doing [i.e., do it inconspicuously] 4) so that your giving to poor people may be done secretly. Then your Father, who sees what is done secretly, will pay you back.

5) "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners [i.e., in prominent view of everyone] in order to be seen [and praised] by people. 6) But when you pray, go to a private place and after closing the door, pray to your Father who is in a secret place, and [since] He sees in secret places, He will reward you. 7) And when you pray, do not use worthless repetitions like the [unconverted] Gentiles, for they think their lengthy, repetitious wording [in prayer] is more likely to be heard [by God]. 8) So, do not be like them, for your Father [already] knows what things you need, [even] before you ask Him. 9)

Therefore, you should pray this way: 'Our Father in heaven, may your name be highly honored. 10) May your kingdom come [to earth]; may your will be done on earth just as it is [already being done] in heaven. 11) Give us our [needed] food for the day. 12) And forgive us of the wrongs we have done to others, since we have also forgiven the wrongs done to us. 13) And do not allow us to fall under temptation, but deliver us from [being harmed by] the evil one.' 14) For if you forgive the wrongs people have done [to you], your heavenly Father will also forgive the wrongs you have done [to Him]. 15) But if you do not forgive the wrongs people have done [to you], neither will your Father forgive the wrongs you have done [to Him].

16) "In addition, when you fast [i.e., going without food and/or drink for religious reasons], do not be like the hypocrites with long faces, for they go around with gloomy expressions on their faces in order to advertise that they are fasting. It is true when I say to you, these people have [already] received their reward. 17) But when you fast, groom your hair and wash your face 18) so that people will not see that you are fasting, but [only] your Father who is in secret [will know about it]. For, [since] He sees [what is done] secretly, He will repay you.

19) "Do not store your valuables [here] on earth, where moths can eat them and where rust can corrode them, and where burglars can break in and steal [them]. 20) But [rather] store up your valuables in heaven [i.e., by investing your life in spiritual things], where neither moths can eat nor rust corrode, nor burglars break in and steal, 21) for wherever [you store] your valuables, that is where your heart [i.e., your real concern] will be also. 22) Your eye is [like] a lamp to your body [i.e., your life]. If your eye sees things correctly, [then] your whole body [i.e., your entire life] will be illuminated [i.e., be directed into proper conduct]. 23) But if your eye sees things wrongly, [then] your whole body [i.e., your entire life] will be full of darkness [i.e., will not be lived properly]. If therefore, the light you have is [really] darkness [i.e., if you are not seeing life properly], that darkness will be very great [i.e., you cannot possibly live properly]. 24) No person can serve two masters, for he will either hate the one and love the other, or else he will cling to the one and look down on the other. You cannot serve God and material things [at the same time].

25) "So I tell you, do not worry about [the material things of]

your life, [such as] what you will eat or what you will drink, or about what you will wear on your body. There are more important things in life than food, and more important things about your body than the clothing you wear. 26) Look at the birds in the sky; they do not plant seeds or harvest [a crop] or store [things] in barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them [adequately]. Are you not a lot more valuable than they are? 27) And which one of you can worry yourself into living a single day longer? 28) And why are you worrying about clothing? Consider how [wild] lilies grow in a field; they do not work or weave, 29) yet I tell you that even Solomon, clothed in his very finest royal robes, was never dressed [as luxuriously] as one of these flowers. 30) So, if God so [beautifully] dresses the grass in a field, which is [green] today, and [then] tomorrow [dries up and] is thrown in the oven [i.e., as fuel], will He not do even more in providing your clothing, you people with such little faith? 31) Therefore, do not worry by asking, 'What are we going to eat?' or 'What are we going to drink?' or 'What are we going to wear?' 32) For these are the things that the [unconverted] Gentiles keep trying to get. But your heavenly Father [already] knows you need these things. 33) So, you should put the kingdom of God and what He says is right first [in your lives], then all these things [i.e., food, drink and clothing] will be provided for you. 34) Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have enough to be worried about in itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

CHAPTER SEVEN

1) "Do not pass [condemning] judgment [on other people] so that you do not receive such judgment [on yourselves]. 2) For the way you judge [other people] is the way you [yourselves] will be judged. And the standard you use [for dealing] with others is the standard that they [and God] will use on you. 3) And why do you look for the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye but ignore the board in your own eye? 4) Or, how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take that speck of sawdust out of your eye,' while there is a board in your own eye? 5) You hypocrite, take the board out of your own eye first; and then you will be able to see clearly enough to take the speck of sawdust out of your brother's eye.

6) "Do not offer sacred things to dogs, and do not throw your pearls in front of [wild] pigs [i.e., to those who will not appreciate them], because they will probably trample on them with their feet and then turn around and attack you.

7) "Ask [God for something] and it will be given to you; look [to God for something] and you will find it; knock [on the door of opportunity] and it will be opened up to you. 8) For every person who asks will [certainly] receive; and the one who looks will [certainly] find; and to the person who knocks, the door will [certainly] be opened. 9) "Or, what person among you would give his son a stone if he asked you for a piece of bread? 10) Or who would give him a snake if he asked you for a fish? 11) If then you know how to give good gifts to your children, even though you are sinful [human beings], how much more [likely] is it that your Father in heaven will give good things to those who ask Him? 12) Therefore, everything that you would like people to do to you, do [these things] to them also. For this is [what is required by] the law of Moses and the prophets.

13) "You should enter [God's kingdom] by means of the narrow door, for the wide door and the broad road are the ones that lead to [spiritual and physical] destruction. And many people will enter [that wide door]. 14) But the door that is narrow and the road that is restricted lead to [spiritual] life and [only] a few people will find them.

15) "Look out for deceiving prophets, who approach you wearing sheep's clothing, but who are [actually] starving wolves in their hearts. 16) You can recognize them by their fruit [i.e., by what their lives produce]. Do people harvest grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistle weeds? 17) In a similar way, every healthy tree produces wholesome fruit; but a diseased tree produces [only] bad fruit. 18) A healthy tree cannot produce bad fruit and neither can a diseased tree produce wholesome fruit. 19) Every tree that does not produce wholesome fruit should be chopped down and thrown into the fire. 20) Therefore, you will recognize them [i.e., prophets] by their fruit [i.e., by what their lives produce].

21) "Not every person who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but [only] that person who does what my Father in heaven requires. 22) Many persons will say to me on the [judgment] day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by [the authority

of] your name, and drive out evil spirits and perform many powerful [supernatural] deeds by your name?' 23) And then I will declare to them, 'I never acknowledged you [as my people]; go away from me, you people who have done sinful things.'

24) "Every person therefore, who hears these words of mine and obeys them will be like the sensible person who built his house on a [foundation of] rock. 25) The [heavy] rains came down and the flood waters rose and the winds blew and beat down on that house, but it did not collapse, for it was [built] on a foundation of rock. 26) And every person who hears these words of mine but does not obey them will be like the foolish person who built his house on [a foundation of] sand. 27) And the [heavy] rains came down and the flood waters rose and the winds blew and struck against that house [until] it collapsed with a terrible crash."

28) And so it happened when Jesus had finished [speaking] these words, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29) for he taught like a person who had authority, instead of like their experts in the law of Moses.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1) And when He had come down from the mountain [See 5:1], large crowds followed Him. 2) Just then a person with an infectious skin disease came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if you want to, you can heal me." 3) Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man, saying, "I do want to; you are healed." And immediately his infectious skin disease was healed. 4) Jesus said to him, "Be sure you do not tell anyone [about your healing yet]; but [first] go and show yourself to the priest and then offer the [sacrificial] gift required by the law of Moses [See Lev. 13:49; 14:2ff], as evidence to them [that you have been healed]."

5) And when He had arrived at Capernaum, a military officer approached Him, begging, 6) "Sir, my slave-boy is at home sick in bed with a paralyzing disease and in serious pain." 7) Jesus said, "I will go and heal him." 8) But the military officer answered, "Sir, I do not deserve for you to come into my house; just say the word and [I know] my slave-boy will be healed. 9) For I also am a man [who serves] under the authority [of others], and I have soldiers [who

serve] under me. I can say to this one 'Go,' and he goes, and to another one, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave 'Do this,' and he does it." 10) And when Jesus heard this, He was amazed and said to those who were following [along], "It is true when I tell to you, I have never found [anyone with] such great faith, not [even] among the Israelites. 11) And I [also] say to you, that many people will come from the east and the west and will sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12) But the children who [are supposed to] belong to the kingdom will be thrown out into the outer darkness where there will be crying and excruciating pain." 13) And Jesus said to the military officer, "Go on your way; since you have believed [in my power to heal], what you desired will be done for you." And the slave-boy was healed that [very] hour.

14) When Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw Peter's mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. 15) He touched her hand and [immediately] her fever subsided and she got up [out of bed] and waited on Him.

16) When evening came they brought many persons who were dominated by evil spirits to Jesus and He drove out the spirits with [just] a word and healed all those who were sick. 17) This was in order to fulfill what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, [Isa. 53:4], "[He] Himself took [care of] our [physical] weaknesses and carried [away] our diseases."

18) Now when Jesus saw large crowds around Him, He gave orders [i.e., to His followers] to leave for the other side [i.e., to go from the west to the east side of Lake Galilee]. 19) [While there] an expert in the law of Moses said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." 20) Jesus replied to him, "The foxes have dens [in which to live] and the birds of the sky have nests [in which to roost]; but the Son of man does not have anywhere to lay His head." 21) Then another one of His disciples said to Him, "Allow me to go and bury my father first." 22) But Jesus answered him, "Become my follower, and let the [spiritually] dead bury them." [i.e., let a person's relatives care for their own family members until they die].

23) And when He entered a boat, His disciples followed Him. 24) Suddenly a violent storm came up over the lake, so that [huge] waves began to overwhelm the boat. But Jesus was sleeping [through it all]. 25) His disciples came and awoke Him, shouting, "Lord, save us, we are sinking!" 26) And He called to them, "Why are you [so]

afraid? You have such little faith!" Then He stood up and sternly commanded the wind and the waves, and they became very calm. 27) The men [on board the boat] marvelled, saying, "What kind of a man is this, that even the wind and waves obey Him?"

28) And when He got to the other side [i.e., the east side of the lake], He was in the district of the Gadarenes. There He was met by two men dominated by evil spirits. They came from the graveyard [where they lived] and were so fierce that no one could [safely] travel that road. 29) Suddenly they shouted out, "What do you want with us, you Son of God? Have you come here to torture us before it is time to?" [i.e., before our punishment is due. See II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6]. 30) Now a large herd of [wild] hogs [i.e., about 2000 of them. See Mark 5:13] was grazing some distance away from them. 31) So, the evil spirits [in one of the men. See Mark 5:1ff] begged Jesus, saying, "If you are going to drive us out [of this man], send us away into that herd of [wild] hogs." 32) Jesus replied to them, "Go [ahead]." And they came out [of the man] and entered the [wild] hogs, and suddenly the entire herd rushed down the cliff into the lake and drowned in the water [below]. 33) [Upon seeing this happen] the men who were tending the herd ran away and went into the town [i.e., of Gadara, one of ten towns making up the province of Decapolis], and told the people everything, [including] what had happened to the men dominated by evil spirits. 34) Quickly, all the people of the town came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw Him, they urged Him to leave the district [i.e., probably because of the loss of livestock].

CHAPTER NINE

1) Then Jesus entered a boat and crossed [back] over [Lake Galilee] and came to His own city [i.e., Capernaum]. 2) [Upon His arrival] they brought to Him a man afflicted with a paralytic disease, [being carried on his cot. See Mark 2:3]. When Jesus saw [the evidence of] their faith [i.e., the man's four friends breaking open the roof and lowering him through it. See Mark 2:4-5], He said to the paralytic, "Son, cheer up, your sins are forgiven." 3) Seeing this, certain experts in the law of Moses said to themselves, "This man is speaking against God." 4) Knowing what they were thinking, Jesus said, "Why are you having such evil thoughts in your minds? 5) For

which is easier, to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or [to say] 'Get up and walk?' 6) But in order that you may know that the Son of man has authority to forgive people's sins on earth, (then He said to the man afflicted with paralysis), 'Get up, pick up your cot and go home.'" 7) So, the man got up and went home. 8) But when the large crowds saw [what had happened], they were filled with deep reverence and gave honor to God for giving such authority to men.

9) As Jesus moved on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the toll booth [i.e., collecting taxes]. He said to him, "Become my follower." And he got up and followed Him.

10) And so it happened, as Jesus was having a meal at Matthew's house, a number of [other] tax collectors and worldly people came to sit down with Him and His disciples. 11) And when the Pharisees saw this they said to His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and worldly people?" 12) When Jesus heard this, He said, "People who are healthy do not need a doctor; but [only] sick people do. 13) Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not [only] sacrifice.' For I did not come to call righteous people [to be my followers] but sinners."

14) Some of John's disciples came to Jesus saying, "Why is it that we and the Pharisees fast frequently, [i.e., go without food and/or drink for religious reasons], but your disciples do not fast [at all]?" 15) Jesus said to them, "Can the groomsmen act sadly while the groom is still with them? But the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. 16) No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth onto an old garment; for what was intended to cover up [the hole] actually tears away [part of] the garment [i.e., when it shrinks], causing a bigger hole. 17) Also, people do not put freshly squeezed grape juice into bottles made of previously used animal skins. If they did, the [old dried-out] animal skins would break open and the grape juice would [all] leak out, and the animal skins would become useless. But people put freshly squeezed grape juice into newly prepared animal skin bottles. That way both of them will survive."

18) While Jesus spoke these things, a leader [of the Jewish synagogue, named Jairus. See Mark 5:22-43] came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but if you come and place your hand on her, she will live [again]." 19) So, Jesus got up and, along with His disciples, followed the man.

20) But just then, a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years came up behind Him and touched the edge of His robe. 21) For she had said to herself, "If I can just touch His robe, I will be healed." 22) When Jesus turned and saw her, He said, "Take courage, daughter, your faith has made you well." And the woman was healed that [very] moment.

23) When Jesus went into the leader [of the synagogue's] house, He saw musicians [playing a funeral dirge] and the crowd carrying on [in mournful wailings]. 24) He said, "Stand back, for the young lady is not [permanently] dead, but [rather] is sleeping." And the people laughed at Him scornfully. 25) But after the crowd was sent outside, Jesus entered [her room, along with her parents and three of His disciples. See Mark 5:37-40] and took her by the hand, and the young lady rose up [from the dead]. 26) And the report of this incident spread all over the district.

27) Now as Jesus moved on from there, two blind men followed Him [i.e., probably being led by sighted persons]. They were shouting, "Have pity on us, son of David!" 28) And when He had entered the house [i.e., probably a friend's house there in Capernaum. See 8:20], the blind men came in [after Him]. Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do what you are asking?" They replied, "Yes, Lord." 29) Then He touched their eyes and said, "Let what you expect be done for you." 30) And [immediately] they were able to see. Jesus then strongly urged them, saying, "Make sure that no one knows [what I have done for you]." 31) But [instead], they went all over the district telling people about Him.

32) As they went on their way a deaf-mute, dominated by an evil spirit, was brought to Jesus. 33) When the evil spirit was driven out [by Jesus] the [former] deaf-mute began to speak, and the crowds marvelled, saying, "No one in Israel has ever seen this done before." 34) But the Pharisees said, "He is driving out evil spirits by [the power of] the chief of evil spirits."

35) Jesus traveled throughout all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the [coming] kingdom and healing all kinds of diseases and illnesses. 36) But when He saw the large crowds He felt compassion for them because they were distressed and disoriented like sheep without a shepherd. 37) Then He said to His disciples, "Certainly there is plenty to harvest but there are [too] few people to do the work. You should

pray to the Lord of the harvest to send [more] workers out into the field to gather His crop."

CHAPTER TEN

1) Jesus then called His twelve apostles [see next verse] to Him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal all kinds of diseases and illnesses.

2) Now the names of the twelve apostles were: First, Simon, also called Peter, Andrew, his brother, James and John, sons of Zebedee, 3) Philip, Bartholomew [i.e., the same as Nathaniel. See John 1:45], Thomas [i.e., the same as Didymus. See John 11:16], Matthew, the tax collector [i.e., the same as Levi. See Mark 2:14], James, the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus [i.e., the same as Judas, son of James. See Luke 6:16], 4) Simon, the Cananean [i.e., the same as the Zealot. See Luke 6:15], and Judas Iscariot, who also [besides being an apostle] was His betrayer.

5) Jesus sent these twelve apostles out and ordered them saying, "Do not go on any road leading to Gentile territory or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6) But [rather] go to the lost sheep of the people of Israel. 7) And preach as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' 8) Heal sick people, raise people from the dead, restore health to those with infectious skin diseases, and drive out evil spirits. You have received [blessings] freely, [now] give them out freely. 9) Do not take [any] gold, silver or copper [coinage] in your money belts, 10) or a traveling bag [for personal belongings], or a change of jackets or shoes, or [even] a walking stick [Note: By comparing this and the restriction in Matt. 10:10 with the permission given in Mark 6:8, the harmony seems to be "if you do not already have a walking stick, do not get one"]. For the worker deserves having his food provided. 11) Then inquire around for a trustworthy family in every town or village you enter, and stay there [with them] until it is time to move on. 12) When you enter a [particular] house, greet the people warmly [Note: The usual Jewish greeting was to say "Peace to you," See Luke 10:4]. 13) And if the people seem trustworthy, express your wish for blessings to rest upon them. But if they prove to be untrustworthy, may those blessings remain on you [instead]. 14) And whoever does not welcome you or listen to what you have to say, shake the dust off of your shoes as you leave that house or town. [Note: This was a Jewish custom showing disdain and intended to suggest

unworthiness]. 15) It is true when I say to you, the districts around Sodom and Gomorrah [i.e., despite their gross sins] will be shown more leniency than that town on the day of judgment.

16) Here is how it will be: I am sending you out like sheep among wolves; therefore you should be as crafty [Note: The Greek word here is "sensible"] as snakes, yet as harmless [Note: The Greek word is "sincere"] as doves. 17) But, watch out for people, for they will turn you over to the [Jewish] councils [for judgment] and will have you flogged in their synagogues. 18) Yes, you will [even] be brought in front of governors and kings for being loyal to me. [This will give you an opportunity] for witnessing to them [as well] as to the [unconverted] Gentiles. 19) But when they turn you over [to them], do not worry about how to speak or what you should say. For you will be told [i.e., by God] what to say at the right time. 20) For it will not be you who speaks, but [rather] the Holy Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you. 21) [At that time] a person will turn his brother over to be killed, and the father [will do the same to] his child. And children will rebel against their parents and turn them over to be killed. 22) And you will be hated by everyone for being loyal to me. But the person who endures [this persecution by remaining faithful] to the end [of his life] is the one who will be saved [i.e., from spiritual and physical destruction]. 23) When they persecute you in one town, run to the next one, for it is true when I tell you, you will not have traveled through [all] the towns of the Israelites until the Son of man comes [i.e., in His kingdom].

24) A disciple is not more important than his teacher, nor a slave more important than his master. 25) A disciple is doing well if he can be [as good] as his teacher, and the slave [as good] as his master. If they have called the master of the house [i.e., Jesus] Beelzebub [i.e., the chief of evil spirits. See Mark 3:22], how much more [likely] will they call members of his household [i.e., the disciples] the same thing! 26) Therefore, do not be afraid [of these persecutors] for there is nothing [they do that will remain] covered up; it will [all] be exposed. And there is nothing they will do secretly that will not be made known [openly]. 27) What I am telling you in the darkness [i.e., in obscurity], you tell it in the light [i.e., openly]. And what you hear [whispered] in your ear [you should] declare it from the housetops. 28) And do not be afraid of those who can kill your body but not your soul. Instead, fear Him [i.e., God] who is able

to destroy both your soul and body in hell. [See note on 5:29]. **29)** Are not two sparrows sold [in the market for food] for a small coin [Note: The coin mentioned here was worth about a half hour's worth of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$3 in 1994]? And not a [single] one of them can fall to the ground without your Father [knowing about it]. **30)** God even knows the number of hairs on your head [Note: The average full head of hair has approximately 25,000 hairs]. **31)** So, do not be afraid, for you are [much] more valuable than many sparrows.

32) Therefore, every person who acknowledges me in front of people [i.e., to be their Lord and Christ], I will acknowledge him [i.e., to be my disciple] in front of my Father in heaven. **33)** But whoever disowns me in front of people [i.e., denies that I am the Christ, or that he is a disciple. See John 18:15-17, 25-27], I will disown him in front of my Father in heaven.

34) Do not think that I came to bring [only] peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace [only] but [also] a sword [of division. See Luke 12:51]. **35)** For I came to set a person at odds against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. **36)** [In fact] a person's enemies will be members of his own family [i.e., in some cases]. **37)** The person who loves his father and mother more than me does not deserve me [i.e., to be my disciple]. And the person who loves his son or daughter more than me does not deserve me [i.e., to be my disciple]. **38)** And the person who does not accept his cross [i.e., his responsibilities with all their difficulties] and become my follower does not deserve me. **39)** The person who finds [everything to satisfy him in] this life [here on earth] will lose [never ending life]. But the person who [is willing to] lose [the comforts and security of] this life [here on earth] for my sake [i.e., in loyal service to me] will find it [i.e., never ending life]. [See Mark 10:29-30].

40) The person who welcomes you [into his home] welcomes me. And the person who welcomes me [into his life] welcomes God, who sent me. **41)** The person who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will receive the [same] reward the prophet gets. And the person who welcomes a good man because he is good will receive the [same] reward the good man gets. **42)** Truly I tell you, whoever gives a mere drink of cold water to one of these least significant [disciples of mine] because he is a disciple, will certainly not lose his [temporal or eternal] reward."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) And so it happened, when Jesus had finished instructing His twelve apostles, He left there [and went] to teach and preach in the [other] Israelite towns. [See 10:23].

2) Now while still in prison, John [the Immerser] heard about the things Christ was doing, [so] he sent [word] through his disciples

3) and said to Jesus, "Are you the One who was to come, or should we look for someone else?" 4) Jesus answered them, "Go and tell

John the things you are hearing and seeing; 5) [how] blind people are receiving back their sight, and crippled people are walking [again],

and people with infectious skin diseases are being healed, and deaf-mutes are hearing [and speaking (?) again], and people are being

raised [from the dead], and poor people are having the good news preached to them. 6) The person who does not find an occasion for

having doubts about my identity is fortunate indeed."

7) As the messengers [sent by John. See Luke 7:24] went on their way, Jesus began to talk to the crowds about John. [He said],

"What did you expect to see when you went out into the desert? A tall stem swaying in the wind? 8) What did you expect to see? A man

dressed in fancy clothes? Look, people who wear fancy clothes live in kings' palaces. 9) Why did you go out [to the desert]? To see a

prophet? Yes, I should say [he was], and much more than a prophet. 10) He is the one about whom it was written [Mal. 3:1], 'Look, I

[will] send my messenger on ahead of you. He will prepare the pathway in front of you.' 11) It is true when I tell you, among [all]

those born of women, no one greater than John the Immerser has come along. Yet the least significant person in the kingdom of heaven

is greater than he. 12) And from the days of John the Immerser the kingdom of heaven is experiencing turmoil, for violent men are

[trying to] take control of it [by bringing it into existence] forcibly [i.e., before its appointed time. See Acts 1:6-7]. 13) For all of the

prophets and the law of Moses prophesied [of this kingdom] up until the time of John. 14) And if you are willing to accept [this truth], this

person [i.e., John] fulfills [the prophecy of] the coming of Elijah. [See Mal. 4:5-6]. 15) The person who has ears to hear with ought to listen

[to this] carefully.

16) But what should I compare the people of this generation

with? They are like children sitting in the open shopping market, who call out to their playmates, 17) 'We [pretended like we] were making music [at a wedding] but you did not dance; we [pretended like we] were wailing [at a funeral] but you did not beat your chest [in mourning].' 18) For when John came, he did not eat or drink [on festive occasions] and people said, 'He is dominated by an evil spirit.' 19) [Then] the Son of man came eating and drinking [at festive occasions] and they said, 'Look, He is a glutton and a drunkard and a friend of tax collectors and worldly people.' It proves that [God's] wise counsel is right by the way things turn out."

20) Then Jesus began to rebuke the people of the towns where most of His powerful miracles were performed because they did not repent [when they saw Him perform them]. 21) [He said] "It will be too bad for you, Chorazin! It will be too bad for you, Bethsaida! For if the powerful miracles had been performed in [the cities of] Tyre and Sidon which were performed in your presence, they would have repented long ago, [demonstrating it] by wearing sackcloth [i.e., a coarse cloth made of goat hair] and throwing ashes [into the air]. 22) But I tell you, Tyre and Sidon will be shown more leniency on the judgment day than you people will. 23) And Capernaum, do you think you will be lifted up toward heaven [as a proud city]? [No indeed], you will [surely] go down to the place of the unseen [i.e., become obscure or obliterated as a city]. For if the powerful miracles had been performed in Sodom which were performed in your presence, it would have remained [even] until today. 24) But I say to you, Sodom will be shown more leniency on the judgment day than you will."

25) About that time Jesus said [in prayer], "I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things [i.e., the significance of Jesus' words and works] from those who [thought they] were wise and intelligent and have [instead] revealed them to people who are child-like. 26) Yes Father, you did this because it was very pleasing to you.

27) "All things have been entrusted to me by my Father and no one [truly] knows the Son except the Father. And neither does anyone [truly] know the Father except the Son and that person to whom the Son wants to reveal Him. 28) Come to me, all of you who are overworked and overburdened and I will give you rest [i.e., spiritual refreshment]. 29) Accept my reins [on your life], and learn

about me, because I am gentle and humble, and [in my service] you will experience rest in your spirits. 30) For my reins [on your life] are easy [to respond to] and the burden I place [on you] is light."

CHAPTER TWELVE

1) About that time Jesus was walking through a grainfield on the Sabbath day. His disciples were hungry so began picking off some heads of grain to eat [the kernels]. [Note: It was an accepted practice for people in that day to be permitted to do this as they walked along paths bordering a grainfield].

2) But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is against the law of Moses to do on a Sabbath day." 3) Jesus replied, "Have you not read what King David did when he and his men were hungry? [I Sam. 21:6]. 4) He entered the house of God [i.e., the Temple] and ate the 'Bread of Presence', which was not permissible, according to the law of Moses, for him or those with him to do, since it was reserved only for the priests. 5) Or, have you not read in the law of Moses that the priests in the Temple defiled the Sabbath day [i.e., by doing the 'work' of offering sacrifices] and were not held guilty [of wrongdoing]? [See Num. 28:9-10]. 6) But I tell you, someone greater than the Temple is here [with you]. 7) If you had [fully] understood what this means: 'I desire mercy and not [only] sacrifice,' you would not have condemned someone who was not guilty [of wrongdoing]. 8) For the Son of man is lord [i.e., has authority] over the Sabbath day."

9) Jesus left there and went into their [i.e., the Pharisees'] synagogues, 10) and there He saw a man with a deformed hand. They asked Him, "Is it permissible by the law of Moses to heal someone on a Sabbath day?" 11) He answered them, "Which one of you who has [only] one sheep, and it fell in a ditch, would not reach down and lift it out [even] if it were on a Sabbath day? 12) Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore, it is permissible by the law of Moses to do what is good on a Sabbath day." 13) Then Jesus said to the man "Reach out your hand." And when he stretched it out, it became normal, just like the other one. 14) But the Pharisees left and began discussing together how they could arrange to kill Him.

15) When Jesus perceived what they were doing He withdrew from that place. Many people followed Him and He healed

all of them. 16) Then He urged them not to reveal His [true] identity, 17) so what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah would be fulfilled when he said, 18) [Isa. 13:1ff] "Look, see my [i.e., God's] servant whom I have chosen; my dear One [i.e., Jesus] with whom my soul is very pleased: I will put my Holy Spirit on Him, and He will proclaim judgment to the [unconverted] Gentiles. 19) He will not be contentious nor shout out [loudly]. Neither will anyone hear His voice [raised] in the streets. 20) He will not [even] break a wilted stalk or put out a smoldering [lamp] wick until He exercises judgment [upon mankind through the Gospel] in order to bring about victory [i.e., in people's lives]. 21) So, in His name the [unconverted] Gentiles will have hope."

22) Then a person dominated by an evil spirit, who was [also] blind and mute, was brought to Jesus. He healed the man so that he was able [both] to speak and see [again]. 23) All the crowds of people were amazed and said, "Can this [Jesus] be the son of David?" 24) But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man does not drive out evil spirits except by [the power of] Beelzebub, the chief of evil spirits." 25) Knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Every kingdom [plagued] with internal division will end in ruin. And every city or household divided from within will not survive. 26) If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself, [so] how then can his kingdom stand? 27) And if I drive out evil spirits by [the power of] Beelzebub, by whom do they [i.e., your people] drive them out? So, they become your judges. 28) But if I drive out evil spirits by [the power of] the Holy Spirit, then [that is evidence that] the kingdom of God has come into your midst [i.e., by my presence and ministry]. 29) Or, how can someone enter a strong man's house and steal his belongings unless he first ties up the strong man? Only then will he be able to steal [his belongings] from his house. 30) The person who is not on my side is [actually] against me. And the person who does not gather [people to me] is [actually] driving them away [from me]. 31) Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven of every sin and abusive word spoken [against God]. But abusive words spoken against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. 32) And whoever speaks an [abusive] word against the Son of man will be forgiven [of it], but whoever speaks [an abusive word] against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven [of it], not in this world nor the one to come. 33) Either be a healthy tree and produce wholesome fruit, or be a diseased tree and

produce rotten fruit, for [the quality of] a tree will be recognized by [the quality of] its fruit. 34) You children of snakes! Since you are evil, how do you expect to speak good things? For the mouth speaks what the heart is filled with. 35) The good person produces good things from his storehouse of goodness. But the evil person produces bad things from his storehouse of evil. 36) And I say to you, a person will [have to] give an account [to God] on the day of judgment for every careless word he had spoken [while on earth]. 37) For you will be considered righteous by the words [you speak] and you will be condemned by the words [you speak]."

38) Then certain experts in the law of Moses and some Pharisees answered Jesus, saying, "Teacher, we would like to see you perform a [supernatural] sign." 39) But He said to them, "It is [only] an evil and unfaithful [i.e., to God] generation of people that looks for a [supernatural] sign. And there will not be any sign given to it except the [supernatural] sign [demonstrated in the life] of Jonah, the prophet. 40) For just like Jonah was in the stomach of the huge fish for three days and nights, so the Son of man will be in the heart of the earth [i.e., the cave-tomb] for three days and nights. 41) The people of Nineveh will stand up on the judgment day along with the people of this generation and will condemn them because they repented [i.e., changed their hearts and lives] when hearing the preaching of Jonah [See Jonah 3:5-10], and [now] Someone greater than Jonah is here [i.e., Jesus]. 42) The queen of the South [Note: This queen was from Sheba, I Kings 10:1, which was probably in Arabia] will stand up on the judgment day along with the people of this generation and will condemn them because she came from a great distance to hear [and see] Solomon's wisdom [I Kings 10:1ff] and [now] Someone greater than Solomon is here [i.e., Jesus]. 43) But when an evil spirit has been driven out of a person, it roams through desert regions trying to find rest but cannot find it. 44) Then it says [to itself], I will return to my house which I came out of [i.e., the body of the person it dominated]. But when it returns [to that body] it finds it empty, cleaned out and [newly] decorated. 45) Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits, more evil than itself, and they reenter [the body] and [begin to] live there, so that the latter state of that person becomes worse than the former [state]. It will be the same way with the people of this evil generation."

46) While Jesus was still speaking to the large crowds, His

mother and [half-] brothers were standing outside [of the large house. See 13:1] wanting to speak to Him. 47) Someone [from the crowd] said to Him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." 48) He answered the person who told Him, "[Just] who is my mother? And who are my brothers?" 49) Then He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Look, [here is] my mother and my brothers! For whoever will do what my Father in heaven desires, is my brother and sister and mother."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) On that [same] day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down on the shore of the lake [i.e., Lake Galilee]. 2) Great crowds gathered around Him so that He went and sat down in a boat [just off shore], while the crowd stood on the beach. 3) And He spoke many things to them in parables [i.e., brief stories to illustrate His teaching], saying, "Once a farmer went out [to his field] to plant grain. 4) And some of the seed he sowed [i.e., scattering it by hand] landed along the side of the road and birds came and ate it. 5) And other seed fell on rocky ground where there was not much soil and immediately it sprouted up because the soil was so shallow. 6) But when the sun came up these tender sprouts were scorched and, since they had such tiny roots, they [quickly] withered away. 7) And other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and [eventually] choked out the tender sprouts. 8) And [still] other seed fell onto fertile soil, where some of it produced a crop of one hundred, some sixty and some thirty times [as much as was planted]. 9) The person who has ears to hear with ought to listen [to this] carefully."

10) Jesus' disciples came and said to Him, "Why are you speaking to them [i.e., the large crowds] by using parables?" 11) He replied, "You disciples are being given an understanding of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but the crowds of people are not. 12) For to the person who [already] has something, [more] will be given, so he will have a larger amount [i.e., of understanding], but from the person who has [almost] nothing, even [the little] he has will be taken away from him. 13) Therefore, I am speaking to them with parables because [although] they can see, they [really] do not perceive, and [although] they can hear, they [really] do not

comprehend, and so they [utterly] fail to understand [what I am trying to get across]. 14) So, the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled by them, which says, [Isa. 6:9f] 'You will hear all right, but you will not understand [what you hear]. You will see all right but you will not perceive [what you see]. 15) For these people's minds are dull, and their ears have difficulty hearing, and they have shut their eyes. For if this were not the case, they would perceive what they see with their eyes, and comprehend what they hear with their ears, and understand with their minds and would turn [back to God] again so I would heal them [from their sins].' 16) But your eyes are fortunate for they [really] see, and so are your ears, for they [really] hear. 17) For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people have desired to see the things you are seeing, but did not get to. They desired to hear the things you are hearing, but did not get to.

18) Listen then to this parable of the farmer [who sowed seed]. 19) When anyone hears the message of the kingdom but does not understand it, the evil one [i.e., the devil] comes to him and grabs away what had been sown in his heart. This is the person who was scattered to the side of the road. 20) And the person who was sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the message and immediately welcomes it joyfully, 21) but since he has such a shallow root, he lasts for [only] a short while. Then when trouble or persecution comes because of the message, immediately he falls away [from God]. 22) And the person who was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the message, but the anxieties of the world [i.e., of life] and the deceptiveness of [material] riches choke the message and he becomes unproductive. 23) But the person who was sown on the fertile soil is the one who hears the message and understands it. Truly, he produces a crop that yields one hundred, sixty or thirty times [as much as was planted]."

24) [Then] Jesus told them another parable, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is similar to a person who sowed seed in his field, 25) but while his workers were asleep his enemy came and scattered weed seeds throughout his wheat field and then left. 26) But when the [green] shoots sprouted up and produced grain, weeds appeared also. 27) The farmer's hired hands came and asked him, 'Did you not plant [only] good seed in your field? Where did the weeds come from [then]?' 28) And he said to them, 'An enemy [of mine] has done this [to me].' The hired hands replied, 'Do you want us then to go and

gather up the weeds?' 29) But the farmer said, 'No, for while you are gathering up the weeds, you might root up [some of] the wheat with them. 30) Let both of them grow together until it is time for the harvest; then at that time, I will tell the harvesters, "Gather up the weeds first, and bind them up into bundles to burn. But gather the wheat into my barn.'"

31) Jesus told them another parable, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is similar to a seed from the mustard tree which a man took and planted in his field. 32) This seed is indeed [one of] the smallest of all seeds, but when it is [fully] grown, it is larger than [other] plants, and [even] becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and roost on its branches."

33) Then He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is similar to yeast, which a woman worked into a batch of dough [i.e., the amount was over half a bushel], until [the dough] was completely leavened [by it]."

34) Jesus spoke all these things to the crowds with parables. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. 35) [This was] so that what was spoken by the prophet would be fulfilled, when he said [Psa. 78:2], "I will open my mouth [to speak] with parables. I will say things that have been hidden from the beginning of time."

36) He then left the crowds and went into the house. [While there] His disciples came to Him, and said, "Explain to us [the meaning of] the parable of the weeds in the field." 37) And He answered them, "The person who planted the good seed is the Son of man, 38) and the field [represents] the world. The good seed [represents] the children who belong to the kingdom, and the weeds [represent] the children who belong to the evil one [i.e., the devil]. 39) The enemy who scattered the weed seeds is the devil; the harvest time is the end of the world; and the harvesters are angels. 40) Just like the weeds were gathered up and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the world. 41) The Son of man will send out His angels and they will gather out of His kingdom all those people who cause others to fall away [from God] and those who [continue to] sin. 42) He will throw these people into the fiery furnace where there will be crying and excruciating pain. 43) Then the people who did what was right will shine out like the sun in their Father's kingdom. The person who has ears [to hear with] ought to listen [to this] carefully.

44) The kingdom of heaven is similar to a person finding a

treasure hidden in a field. After finding it, he was so happy he hid it [again], then went out and sold everything he owned so he could buy that field.

45) Again, the kingdom of heaven is similar to a [retail] merchant searching to buy some fine pearls. 46) When he found an extremely valuable one he went and sold all that he owned and bought it.

47) Again, the kingdom of heaven is similar to a drag-net [for fishing] that was cast into the lake and gathered all kinds [of fish]. 48) When it became full, the fishermen dragged it up onto the shore. Then they sat down and, [sorting their catch], placed the good [i.e., edible fish] into containers, but threw out the bad [i.e., inedible ones]. 49) At the end of the world it will be that same way. The angels will come and divide the sinful people from the ones who did what was right, 50) and throw the sinful ones into the fiery furnace where there will be crying and excruciating pain."

51) "Have you understood all these things?" [Jesus asked]. "Yes," they said to Him. 52) Then He said to them, "Therefore every expert in the law of Moses who has been made a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is similar to a [wealthy] homeowner who brought [both] new and old things out of his supply of goods."

53) And it happened, when Jesus had finished [giving] these parables, He went away from that place.

54) And when He came to His home town [i.e., Nazareth], Jesus taught people in their synagogues to their amazement. They said, "Where did this man get [such] wisdom and [the ability to perform] these supernatural deeds? 55) Is not he the carpenter's [i.e., Joseph's] son? [And] is not his mother named Mary, and his brothers [named] James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? 56) And are not his sisters all [here] with us? Where then did he get all these things [i.e., wisdom, knowledge, miracles, etc]?" 57) And they were led to doubt His true identity. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet does not go without being honored, except in His own home town and among His own family members."

58) So, He did not perform very many supernatural deeds in that place because of the people's lack of faith.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1) About that time Herod the tetrarch [Note: This man was the son of Herod the Great (See 2:1) and governor of that district] heard the report about what Jesus had been saying and doing. 2) He told his servants, "This must be John, the Immerser; he has risen from the dead and [that explains how] these powers can work through him [i.e., Jesus]." 3) For Herod had arrested John and had him chained and put in prison in order to please Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. 4) For John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to marry her." 5) Now Herod wanted to have him put to death, [but hesitated], fearing the crowd, because they considered John to be a prophet.

6) But when Herod's birthday came, Herodias' daughter [Note: According to Josephus her name was Salome], pleased him by [her sensual] dancing in front of the party guests. 7) [Herod was so pleased with her performance that] he promised, with an oath, to give her whatever she asked for [i.e., with limitations. See Mark 6:23]. 8) Her mother persuaded her to say, "Give me the head of John, the Immerser, here on this [large] platter." 9) Now King Herod became very distressed [over such a gruesome request]; but because he had [promised with] oaths and [to look good in front of] his party guests, he ordered John's head to be given [to her]. 10) So, he sent [word to his officers] and had John decapitated in the prison. 11) His head was brought on a [large] platter and given to the young woman [i.e., Salome], and she took it to her mother [i.e., Herodias]. 12) Jesus' disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus [all about the incident].

13) Now when Jesus heard about it He left there in a boat and went [across to the east side of the lake] to a deserted place. When the crowds found out [He was leaving] they followed Him [i.e., by traveling around] on the shore from the [surrounding] towns. 14) When Jesus came out [of His place of seclusion] and saw a large crowd, He felt a deep compassion for them and healed their sick people. 15) When it became evening, the disciples came to Him and said, "This place is deserted and it is getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go into the towns and buy food [for their supper]." 16) But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away; you men give them [something] to eat." 17) And they replied, "But we have

here [only] five loaves of [barley] bread [See John 6:9] and two [probably smoked] fish." 18) And He said, "Bring the bread and fish here to me." 19) He ordered the crowds to recline on the grass. Then He took the five loaves of bread and two fish and, looking up to heaven, asked God's blessing on the food, broke it [in pieces], then gave it to the disciples to distribute to the crowds. 20) They all ate until they were full, then gathered up twelve baskets full of the remaining broken pieces. 21) Those eating numbered about five thousand men, in addition to the women and children.

22) Then immediately Jesus ordered the disciples to enter the boat and row on ahead of Him to the other side [i.e., to the west side of Lake Galilee] until He could send the crowds away. 23) After He had dispersed them, He went up into the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening had come He was there alone. 24) [Meanwhile] the boat, still some distance from shore, was being severely battered by the waves because of the opposing winds.

25) Then between three and six o'clock in the morning Jesus came walking to them on the [surface of the] lake. 26) When the disciples saw Him walking on the water they became frightened, saying, "It is a spirit!" and cried out with fear. 27) Just then Jesus called out to them, "Take courage and do not be afraid; it is I." 28) Peter answered Him, "Lord, if it is [really] you, ask me to come to you [walking] on the water." 29) And Jesus replied, "Come [ahead]." So, Peter climbed over the side of the boat and went to Jesus, walking on the water. 30) But when he saw the [furious] wind he became fearful and began to sink, shouting out, "Lord, save me!" 31) And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him and said, "You have such little faith; why did you doubt?" 32) And when they [i.e., both Jesus and Peter] got up into the boat, the wind [immediately] stopped. 33) Then the disciples in the boat worshiped Jesus, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

34) And when they had [finally] crossed over [i.e., to the west side of the lake], they landed at the region of Gennesaret. 35) When the people there recognized Jesus, they sent to all the surrounding regions and had all who were sick brought to Him. 36) They begged Him that they might only touch the edge of His robe. And all those who got to touch it were made well.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1) Then some Pharisees and experts in the law of Moses came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, 2) "Why do your disciples violate the tradition of the [Jewish] elders? For they do not [ceremonially] wash their hands before eating [their meals]." 3) And He answered them, "Why do you also violate the commandments of God by [following] your traditions? 4) For God said, [Ex. 20:12], 'Give honor to your father and mother.' and [Ex. 21:17], 'Whoever says bad things about his father or mother should surely be put to death.' 5) But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, I have given to God the money I could have helped you with;' 6) this person does not honor his father [or mother]. You have made God's message useless by [thus enforcing] your traditions. 7) You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied accurately about you, saying [Isa. 29:13], 8) 'These people [claim to] honor me with their lips [i.e., by what they say], but their heart is far from [honoring] me. 9) They are worshiping me for nothing [because they are] teaching principles that are [merely] the requirements of men.'" 10) Then Jesus called the crowds to come to Him, and He said to them, "Listen and understand. 11) It is not what enters the mouth of a person that [spiritually] corrupts him, but what proceeds out of his mouth that [spiritually] corrupts him."

12) Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were upset [with you] when they heard [you say] that?" 13) But He answered and said, "Every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted. 14) [So], let these Pharisees alone; they are blind leaders. And if a blind person leads a blind person, both of them will fall into a ditch." 15) And Peter said to Him, "Explain the parable to us." 16) And He replied, "Are you still unable to understand? 17) Do you not realize that whatever enters a person's mouth goes into his stomach and [eventually] passes out into the toilet? 18) But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from his heart. These are what [spiritually] corrupt a person. 19) For evil thoughts, murder, extramarital affairs, sexual immorality, stealing, perjury, slander --- [all these] come from a person's heart, 20) and are what corrupt him [spiritually]. But eating [a meal] with [ceremonially] unwashed hands does not [spiritually] corrupt him."

21) And Jesus left there and went into the regions of Tyre and

Sidon [i.e., cities on the northwest coast of Palestine]. 22) Just then a Canaanite woman came out of that area [Note: Mark 7:26 calls her a Syrophoenician Gentile], crying, "O Lord, son of David, have pity on me. My daughter is seriously troubled by an evil spirit." 23) But He did not say a word to her. His disciples came and begged Him, "Send her away, for she is [continually] shouting at us [as we go along]." 24) He answered them, "I was sent only to the straying sheep of the Israelites." 25) But she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me." 26) And He answered [her], "It is not proper to take bread away from the children and throw it to the dogs." 27) But she replied, "Yes, Lord, but even dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their owner's table." 28) Then Jesus answered her, "O, woman, how great your faith is. May what you want be done for you." And her daughter was healed that very moment.

29) Jesus left there and went [over] near Lake Galilee. He went up into a mountain and sat down there. 30) Large crowds came to Him, bringing crippled, blind, deaf-mute, disabled and many other [sick] people and laid them down at His feet. And He healed [all of] them, 31) so that the crowd marvelled when they saw deaf-mutes talking, injured people healed, crippled people walking and blind people seeing. And they honored the God of the Israelites [for such great miracles].

32) Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, "I feel deeply moved over this crowd, because they have continued listening to me for three days now, and have nothing [left] to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry because they will become weak along the way." 33) And the disciples said to Him, "Where will we get enough loaves of bread to feed a large crowd in [such] a deserted place [as this]?" 34) Jesus replied, "How many loaves of bread do you have?" They said, "[We have] seven [loaves] and a few small fish." 35) Then He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground, 36) and He took the seven loaves of bread and the fish and gave thanks to God for them. He divided the food and gave it to the disciples who, [in turn], distributed it to the crowds. 37) They all ate until they were full; then gathered up seven baskets full of broken pieces which were left over. 38) The number who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. 39) Jesus then sent the crowds away while He boarded a boat and crossed the lake to the region of Magadan [i.e., the west side of Lake Galilee].

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1) The Pharisees and Sadducees came [and attempted] to test Jesus [by] asking Him to perform a [supernatural] sign from heaven. 2) But He answered them, { { These words are omitted in most ancient manuscripts: "When the sky is reddish in the evening, you predict fair weather [for the next day]. 3) And when the sky is reddish and overcast in the morning, you predict [that it will be] bad weather that day. You know how to interpret [weather] conditions from the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times [i.e., what will happen in the spiritual realm]" } }. 4) "It is an evil and spiritually unfaithful generation of people [that keeps on] looking for a [supernatural] sign; but there will be no [such] sign given to it except the sign of Jonah [i.e., being in the huge fish for three days]." Then He left them and went away.

5) Now the disciples came to the other side [i.e., to the east side of the lake], but had forgotten to bring food [with them]. 6) Jesus said to them, "Pay attention and watch out for the leavening [effect] of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 7) And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, ["Why be concerned about yeast since] we did not bring [any] bread?" 8) Jesus, being aware of their thoughts, said, "O, you people with [such] little faith! Why are you reasoning among yourselves about not having bread? 9) Do you not understand yet or remember that five thousand people [were fed] with five loaves of bread and how many baskets [of pieces] were picked up [afterward]? 10) Or that four thousand people [were fed] with seven loaves of bread and how many baskets [of pieces] were picked up [afterward]? 11) How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking to you about [physical] bread? But [rather I meant] watch out for the yeast [i.e., the influence] of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12) Then they understood that He was not telling them to watch out for the yeast in [physical] bread, but for the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

13) Now when Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who are people saying that the Son of man is?" 14) They replied, "Some say you are John the Immerser; some [the prophet] Elijah; and others [the prophet] Jeremiah, or one of the [other] prophets [come back to life]." 15) He [then] said to

them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16) And Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one], the Son of the living God." 17) Jesus replied, "Simon, son of Jonah, you are fortunate [indeed], for this [truth] was not revealed to you by human beings but [rather] by my Father who is in heaven. 18) And I also tell you, [although] you are Peter [i.e., a stone], it is on this rock [i.e., the truth you have just confessed] that I will build my church and [not even] the gates of the unseen place of departed spirits will win out over it [i.e., all efforts to stamp out the church by killing Christians will fail]. 19) [And] I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven [i.e., for opening up the way into it]. And whatever [truth] you [and the other apostles. See 18:18] require [people to believe and practice] here on earth will have already been required of them [by God] in heaven. And whatever [truth] you do not require [of people] on earth, will not be required [by God] in heaven." 20) Then He ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Christ.

21) From that time onward Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He would have to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the [Jewish] elders, leading priests, and experts in the law of Moses; [that He would then] be killed and [yet] raised up on the third day. 22) Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "I should say not, Lord; that will never happen to you." 23) But Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get away from me, Satan; you are causing a hindrance to me because you are not thinking about God's things but about men's."

24) Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wants to be my follower, he should deny self [i.e., of always having its own way] and lift up his cross [of responsibility] and [then he can] become my follower. 25) For whoever would [try to] save his life [i.e., by neglecting spiritual things] will lose it [i.e., miss out on the blessings of God]. But whoever [is willing to] lose his life [i.e., in commitment to God's service] for my sake will find it [i.e., obtain both temporal and spiritual blessings]. 26) For what benefit is it to a person if he gains the whole world [of material things] but [has to] give up his life [i.e., all the spiritual blessings]? Or what should a person give in exchange for his life? 27) For the Son of man will return in the splendor of His Father, accompanied by His angels. Then He will reward or punish every person in proportion to what he has done

[with his life]. **28)** It is true when I tell you, some of those standing here will not die before they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1) And after six days [had passed], Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother John aside and went up into a high mountain [i.e., an unidentified mountain nearby]. **2)** There His whole appearance was [miraculously] changed in front of them. His face shone [as brilliantly] as the sun and His clothing became as bright as light. **3)** Then suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Jesus. **4)** Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is so good for us to be here. If you wish, I will build three [small] shelters here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." [Note: Perhaps Peter wanted to provide quarters for the three to stay temporarily, thus prolonging the wonderful experience. In any event, he should not have done what suggested that Moses and Elijah were equal to Jesus]. **5)** While he was still talking, suddenly a bright cloud engulfed them. Just then, a voice spoke out of the cloud, saying, "This is my dearly loved Son, who is very pleasing to me; listen to Him." **6)** And when the disciples heard [the voice], they fell [to the ground] on their faces and became very afraid. **7)** But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up, and do not be afraid." **8)** When they looked up, the only one they saw was Jesus.

9) And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus ordered them, saying, "Do not tell anyone about the vision [you have just seen] until the Son of man has been raised from the dead." **10)** His disciples asked Him, "Why then [since you are obviously the Messiah] do the experts in the law of Moses say that Elijah must come first, [i.e., before the Messiah]?" **11)** Jesus answered them, "Elijah truly was to come, and restore all things [i.e., to their proper perspective concerning the Messiah]. **12)** But I tell you that Elijah has already come, but they [i.e., the Jewish leaders] did not understand who he was, but [instead] did to him what they wanted to. In the same way, the Son of man will also suffer from what the Jews will do." **13)** Then the disciples understood that He was talking to them about John the Immerser.

14) When Jesus and His disciples met the crowd [that was gathered], a man came kneeling down to Jesus and saying to Him, **15)**

"Lord, take pity on my son, for he has violent seizures and suffers intense pain. He often falls into a fire or into water. [Note: This man was also dominated by an evil spirit. See verse 18]. 16) I brought him to [some of] your disciples [for help] but they were not able to heal him." 17) Jesus replied [to the crowd], "You perverse generation of faithless people! How long must I be with you [i.e., before you understand]? How long do I have to be patient with you? Bring the sick boy to me." 18) Then Jesus spoke sternly to [the evil spirit in] the boy, and it left him, and he was immediately healed.

19) Then Jesus' disciples came to Him privately and said, "Why could we not drive out that evil spirit?" 20) He answered them, "[It was] because you had such little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith as [small as] a mustard tree seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to that place over there' and it would move. And nothing will be impossible for you [to do]." {{Some manuscripts contain the following verse: 21) But this kind [of spirit] can not be driven out except by praying and fasting}}.

22) And while the disciples were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man will be handed over to [evil] men 23) and they will kill Him, but on the third day He will be raised up [from the dead]." And they were very grieved [when they heard this].

24) When Jesus and His disciples came to Capernaum, the collectors of the tax [Note: This was the annual tax used for meeting the expenses of the Temple service and consisted of two days' worth of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$140 in 1994] came to Peter and said, "Does not your teacher [also] pay the [Temple] tax?" 25) He replied, "Yes, [He does]." And when Peter entered the house, Jesus spoke to him first, [i.e., without waiting for Peter to tell Him what he had said to the tax collectors], saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do earthly kings collect custom duty and taxes? From their children or from strangers?" 26) And when Peter said, "From strangers," Jesus added, "Therefore, children are free [from such taxation]. 27) But, so that we do not become a hindrance to these [tax collectors], go to the lake and cast in your hook [and line]. Then take the first fish [you catch], open its mouth and you will find a coin [i.e., worth twice the amount of an individual's Temple tax assessment]. Take it and give it [to the tax collectors] for you and me."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1) At that very time His disciples came to Jesus, asking, "Who then is the most important person in the kingdom of heaven?" 2) So, He called to Him a little child and placed him in front of them, 3) and said, "Truly I tell you, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven unless you turn [your life around] and become like little children [i.e., having child-like humility]. 4) Therefore, the person who will humble himself, as this little child, is the most important person in the kingdom of heaven. 5) And the person who welcomes one little child like this, in my name [i.e., because he belongs to me], welcomes me [also]. 6) But that person who causes one of these little ones [i.e., humble followers of the Lord] who believes in me to be led astray [from God], he would have been better off to have had a huge millstone tied around his neck and dumped into a deep ocean [Note: This "millstone" was a heavy circular stone rolled over grain to crush it and was moved by an animal walking in a circle].

7) "It will be too bad for the world because of occasions that cause people to fall away [from God]! For it is inevitable that such occasions come, but it is too bad for that person who is responsible for causing it to happen. 8) If your hand or your foot becomes the occasion for you falling away [from God], cut them off and throw them away. It would be better for you to enter [never ending] life disabled or crippled, rather than keeping both hands and both feet and being thrown into the never ending fire [i.e., because they caused you to fall away from God]. 9) And if your eye becomes the occasion for you falling away [from God], gouge it out and throw it away, for it would be better for you to enter [never ending] life with [only] one eye, rather than keeping both eyes and being thrown into a fiery hell [i.e., because one of them caused you to fall away from God]. 10) Make sure you do not look down on any one of these little ones [i.e., humble followers of Christ]. For I tell you, their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. {{Some ancient manuscripts include verse 11) For the Son of man came to save those who were lost}} 12) What do you think? If anyone had a hundred sheep, and one of them wandered away, would he not leave the ninety-nine [safe ones] and go to the mountains looking for the one that wandered away? 13) Truly I tell you, if he happens to find it, he is happier over it than over the ninety-nine that had not wandered

away. 14) In the same way, it is not the will of your Father in heaven that [a single] one of these little ones [i.e., humble followers of Christ] should be lost.

15) "And if your brother sins against you, go and show him where he wronged you, [but] keep it between just the two of you. If he listens to you [i.e., accepts your reasoning and repents], you have won your brother [back]. 16) But if he does not listen [to your reasoning], take one or two other people with you, so that two or three witnesses can verify every word [that was said]. 17) And if he refuses to listen to them [i.e., the witnesses], explain the [whole] matter to the church [i.e., probably a specially called meeting of mature Christians to resolve the matter]. And if he refuses to listen to the church also, [i.e., to acknowledge his sin and repent of it], consider him like an [unconverted] Gentile or tax collector [i.e., do not have fellowship with him]. 18) Truly I tell you, whatever [truth] you disciples require [of people to believe and obey] on earth will have [already] been required [by God] in heaven. And whatever [truth] you do not require [of people to believe and obey] on earth, will not have [already] been required [by God] in heaven. 19) I tell you again, if two of you agree [here] on earth concerning anything you ask for [i.e., in prayer], God in heaven will grant it to you. 20) For I am in the presence of two or three [disciples] wherever they are gathered in my name."

21) Then Peter came and said to Jesus, "Lord, how often must I forgive my brother when he sins against me? As many as seven times?" 22) Jesus replied, "I tell you, not [just] up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven [i.e., a large indefinite number of times].

23) "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is similar to a certain king who decided to settle his account with his servants. 24) When he began figuring, one of his servants, who owed him a huge sum of money [Note: The amount here was about 750 days of a farm laborer's pay or over \$50,000 in 1994], was brought to him. 25) But since he did not have enough [money] to pay [what he owed], his master ordered that he, his wife, his children and all his possessions be sold [in order] to pay [his debt]. 26) The servant then fell to the ground [before his master] and humbly implored him, saying, 'Master, [please] be patient with me and I will repay you everything [I owe].' 27) And the master of that servant felt deep pity [for him], so released him [from custody] and

canceled his debt. 28) But that [same] servant went out and found one of his fellow-servants who owed him a small sum of money [Note: The amount was about one day of a farm laborer's pay or about \$70 in 1994]. He grabbed him by the throat, saying, 'Pay [me] what you owe.' 29) His fellow-servant fell [on the ground before him] and begged him, saying, '[Please] be patient with me and I will repay you [all I owe you].' 30) But he would not do it. Instead, he took him and had him thrown into prison until he paid [him] all he owed. 31) When his fellow-servants saw what he had done, they were very upset and went and told their master everything that had happened. 32) Then his master called for him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I canceled all of your debt because you begged me to. 33) Should you not also have had pity on your fellow-servant just as I pitied you?' 34) His master then became furious and turned him over [to the authorities] to be punished until he paid all that he owed. 35) In the same way my heavenly Father will also deal with you [i.e., punish you] unless every one of you forgives his brother from the heart."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

1) And so when Jesus had finished speaking He left Galilee and came to the region of Judea, on the east side of the Jordan River.
2) Large crowds followed Him there and were healed by Him.

3) Some Pharisees came to Him, [attempting] to put Him to a test. They said, "Is it permissible by the law of Moses for a man to divorce his wife for any reason [he chooses]?" 4) And He answered them, "Have you not read [Gen. 1:27; 5:2] that when God created [mankind as] male and female, 5) He said [Gen. 2:24], 'For this reason [i.e., since He made one woman for one man], a man will leave [the home of] his father and mother and will cling to his wife, [so that] the two of them will [then] become one flesh [i.e., united in such a close relationship as to constitute one body]?' 6) So, [upon becoming husband and wife] they no longer function [entirely] as two persons, but [as] one body. Therefore, those whom God [so] joins together [in the marriage bond], no person must [ever] separate." 7) They replied, "Why then did Moses order [a man] to provide a legal divorce decree [Deut. 24:1], and then divorce his wife?" 8) Jesus said to them, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives [only] because

of the rebellious spirits you [Jews] had. But this was not how it was [intended to be] from the beginning [i.e., when God created one woman for one man]. 9) And I tell you, whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits sexual unfaithfulness [toward her], unless the reason for the divorce was sexual unfaithfulness [on his wife's part]. And the person who marries a woman who has been divorced commits sexual sin with her [i.e., because she is still rightfully married to her first husband]." 10) His disciples [then] said to Jesus, "If this is the way it has to be between a man and his wife, it is not worth getting married." 11) But He replied, "Not all men can accept such an arrangement [i.e., not marrying], but it is [only] for those who have the capacity for accepting it. 12) For there are eunuchs [i.e., men who do not have normal sexual activity] who are born that way; then there are eunuchs who were made that way by undergoing a surgical operation; then there are [also] eunuchs who purposely chose to avoid normal sexual activity for the sake of [ministering in] the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept such an arrangement [i.e., of not marrying], should do so."

13) Then some little children were brought to Jesus so he could pray and place His hands on them [i.e., to bestow a blessing on them]. But His disciples spoke harshly to the people [for doing this]. 14) But Jesus said, "Allow these little children to come to me and stop trying to prevent them. For the kingdom of heaven belongs to such [humble ones] as these." [See 18:4]. 15) So, He placed His hands on them [i.e., to bestow a blessing] and [then] left that place.

16) Then a rich, young man [See verse 22] came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good deed should I do in order to have never ending life?" 17) Jesus answered him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is [only] One who is good [i.e., God]. But if you want to enter [never ending] life, [then] obey His commandments." 18) The young man asked Him, "Which [ones]?" Jesus answered, "You must not murder. You must not be sexually unfaithful to your mate. You must not steal. You must not give false testimony. 19) Show honor to your father and mother. And you must love your neighbor the same as you love yourself." 20) The young man said to Him, "I have [already] been observing all of these commandments. What do I [still] lack?" 21) Jesus replied, "If you want to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give [the money] to poor people; then become my follower and you will have treasure in heaven." 22)

But when the young man heard these words, he went away saddened, for he had many possessions.

23) Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is difficult for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24) And again I tell you, it is [actually] easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." 25) When the disciples heard this, they were utterly amazed, saying, "Who then can [possibly] be saved?" 26) Jesus looked at them and said, "This would be impossible with men, but everything is possible with God." 27) Peter then answered Him, "Look, we have left everything [i.e., homes, jobs, family, etc.], to follow you. What will we get for it?" 28) Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, [since] you have become my followers, in the time of new beginnings [i.e., the church age], when the Son of man sits on His glorious throne, you apostles will also sit on twelve thrones, judging [i.e., through their writings] the twelve tribes of Israel [i.e., God's people]. 29) And every person who has left his house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children or property, for my name's sake [i.e., to become a servant of the Lord], will receive [back] a hundred times as much [in this life] and will [also] inherit never ending life. 30) But many will be last [i.e., in importance and blessings] who [seem to] be first, and those [who seem to be] first will [end up] being last."

CHAPTER TWENTY

1) "For the kingdom of heaven is similar to a farmer who went out early one morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2) When he had agreed with the workers [on wages] for the usual farm laborer's pay for a day's work, he [then] sent them to work in his vineyard. [Note: The coin mentioned here would amount to \$60-\$84 in 1994, based on \$5-\$7 an hour for a twelve hour day. This coin also forms the basis for calculating all other monetary references in the New Testament]. 3) He went out about nine o'clock in the morning and saw other unemployed laborers standing [around] in the open shopping market. 4) He said to them, 'You men also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So, they went to work. 5) [Then] he went out again about noon and again at three o'clock in the afternoon and made the same offer. 6) [Finally] he went out [once more] at about five o'clock in the afternoon and found [still] other men standing around. He said, 'Why have you been

standing around all day and not working?' 7) They replied, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You men also may go to work in my vineyard.' 8) And when evening came the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers [in] and pay them their wages, beginning with the last [one hired, then] to the first.' 9) So, when those hired about five o'clock in the afternoon came in, each one received the usual pay for one full day's work. [See note on verse 2]. 10) Then when those who were hired first came [to get paid], they expected to receive more money [than those hired later], but each one received the usual pay for one full day's work also. 11) And when they received it, they complained to the farmer, 12) saying, 'These men [you hired] last have worked only one hour and you gave them wages equal to ours when we carried the heaviest load of the day's work and [put up with] the scorching heat [all day long].' 13) But he answered one of them, saying, 'Friend, I have not done anything wrong to you. Did you not agree with me to accept the usual pay for one full day's work? 14) Take what belongs to you and go on your way. I want to give this last person [hired] the same wages I gave you. 15) Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my own money? Or, is it that your eye is envious because I choose to be so generous?' 16) So, the [person who seems to be] last will be first [i.e., in importance and blessings], but the [person who seems to be] first will [end up] being last."

17) As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem He took the twelve apostles aside. As they traveled along He said to them, 18) "Now look, we are going up to Jerusalem and [while there] the Son of man will be turned over to the leading priests and experts in the law of Moses. They will condemn Him to death, 19) and turn Him over to the [unconverted] Gentiles, who will mock, whip and crucify Him; then on the third day He will be raised up."

20) Then the mother of Zebedee's sons [i.e., James and John] came to Jesus with her sons and, bowing down in reverence before Him, made a request of Him. 21) He responded to her, "What would you like me to do for you?" She answered, "Appoint my two sons to sit at your right side and at your left in your [coming] kingdom." 22) But Jesus replied to her, "You [really] do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup [i.e., of suffering] that I am about to drink?" They [i.e., James, John and their mother. See Mark 10:35ff] answered, "[Yes] we are able to." 23) He said to them,

"Indeed you will drink my cup [of suffering]. But it is not my prerogative to appoint who sits at my right side and at my left, but rather these places are for those to whom it has been assigned by my Father." 24) When the other ten apostles heard this, they became very upset with the two brothers. 25) Then Jesus called all the apostles to Him and said, "You are aware that rulers among the [unconverted] Gentiles lord it over their own people and their important men domineer over them [as well]. 26) But it will not be this way among you, for whoever would like to become important among you will become your servant. 27) And whoever would like to be first [in prominence] among you will be your slave. 28) Even so, the Son of man did not come to be served [by others] but to be the servant [of others], and to sacrifice His life as a ransom price to purchase many people [i.e., back from Satan]."

29) As they [i.e., the twelve apostles and Jesus] were leaving Jericho [Note: This was a town about eighteen miles northeast of Jerusalem], a huge crowd followed them. 30) Just then, two blind men sitting along side of the road heard that Jesus was passing by that way. [So], they shouted out, "Lord, take pity on us, son of David." 31) The crowd spoke harshly to them, telling them to be quiet, but they shouted all the more, "Lord, have pity on us, son of David." 32) Then Jesus stopped, and calling to them, said, "What do you want me to do for you?" 33) They answered, "Lord, we want to have our sight back." 34) Jesus felt deep pity for them, so He touched their eyes and immediately their sight was restored, and they became [His] followers.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1) And when they [i.e., Jesus and the twelve apostles] approached Jerusalem and came close to Bethphage, near the Mount of Olives [Note: This was about three-fourths of a mile east of Jerusalem], Jesus sent two disciples on ahead, 2) saying to them, "Go into the village there and immediately you will find a donkey tied up with her colt. Untie them and bring them to me. 3) If anyone says something to you, tell them, 'The Lord needs these animals,' and he will immediately send them. 4) Now this will happen in order to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5) [Zech. 9:9], 'You should tell the daughter of

Zion [i.e., the people of Jerusalem], look, your King is coming to you. He is gentle and [will be] riding on a donkey, [even] on a colt, the offspring of the donkey."

6) And the disciples went and did exactly what Jesus had ordered them to do. 7) They brought the donkey and its colt and spread their clothing on them, and Jesus mounted the colt. 8) A large part of the crowd spread their clothing on the roadway; others cut branches from trees and spread them [also] on the roadway. 9) And the crowds that walked ahead and followed behind Him shouted, "*Hosanna* to the son of David. [Note: The Syriac word '*Hosanna*' originally meant 'save now' but came to be used as an expression of welcome, praise, blessing or acclamation]. May He, who comes in the name [i.e., by the authority] of the Lord, be blessed. *Hosanna* in the highest [i.e., may this blessing reach to the highest heaven]." 10) And when He had come to Jerusalem, the entire city was stirred up; they were asking, "Who is this man?" 11) The crowds answered, "He is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee."

12) Then Jesus entered the Temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold things there. He upset the tables of the cashiers [i.e., those who exchanged foreign coins] and the benches of those who sold pigeons [for sacrifices]. 13) And He said to them, "It is written [Isa. 56:7], 'My house [i.e., the Temple] will be called a house for prayer', but [Jer. 7:11 says], 'You have made it a hideout for thieves.'"

14) [Then] blind and crippled people came to Him in the Temple and He healed them. 15) But when the leading priests and the experts in the law of Moses saw the wonderful things [i.e., miracles] He was performing and [heard] the children shouting in the Temple, "*Hosanna* to the son of David," [See note at verse 9], they were filled with anger [i.e., over the acclaim being given to Jesus]. 16) They said to Jesus, "Do you hear what these [children] are saying [about you]?" Jesus answered them, "Yes, [I do]. Have you not read [in Psa. 8:2] 'You have ordained that praise would come from the mouths of infants and small children?'"

17) He then left them and went out of the city [of Jerusalem] to Bethany [Note: This was a small village near Bethphage] and stayed there [i.e., probably at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. See John 11:1].

18) Now in the morning, as Jesus returned to the city [of Jerusalem], He became hungry. 19) Upon seeing a fig tree along side

of the road, He approached it [i.e., expecting to find fruit on it], but found nothing but leaves. He said to the tree, "There will not be fruit on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered up. 20) When His disciples saw this, they marvelled, saying, "How could the fig tree wither up so suddenly?" 21) Jesus answered, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith, without doubting, you will not only [be able to] do what was done to this fig tree, but even if you tell this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the ocean,' it will happen. 22) And everything you ask for in prayer you will receive, if you have [enough] faith."

23) When He had come into the Temple, the leading priests and elders of the [Jewish] people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things [i.e., miracles and teaching]? And who gave you this authority?" 24) Jesus answered them, "Let me also ask you a question. If you answer it, then I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 25) Where did the immersion of John come from? From heaven or from men?" And they discussed this among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'from heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe his message?' 26) But if we say, 'from men,' we are afraid the crowd will oppose us because they all consider John to be a prophet." 27) So, they answered Jesus, "We do not know [where John got the authority for his immersion]." Jesus then replied to them, "[Then] neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things [i.e., miracles and teaching]. 28) But what do you think [about this]? A man had two sons; He went to the first one and said, 'Son, go to work in my vineyard today.' 29) The son answered, 'No, I will not,' but later changed his mind and went. 30) He went to the second son and said the same thing. That son replied, '[Yes], sir, I will,' [but] then did not go. 31) Which of these two sons did what his father wanted?" They answered, "The first one." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, tax collectors and prostitutes [will] enter the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32) For John came to show you the way to be right with God, but you would not believe his message. Yet the tax collectors and prostitutes believed it, and when you saw this, even then you did not change your minds so as to believe his message."

33) Listen to another parable [i.e., a brief story used to illustrate His teaching]: "There was the owner of a farm who planted a vineyard and built a fence around it. He constructed a grape

squeezing device, built a [lookout] tower [near it], leased it to tenant farmers and then went to another country. 34) And when the season for harvesting the grapes approached, the owner of the farm sent his slaves to the tenant farmers to arrange for delivery of his crop. 35) But the tenant farmers took the farm owner's slaves and beat one, killed another and stoned another. 36) The owner of the farm then sent additional slaves and they were treated the same way. 37) Then later on he sent his own son to the tenant farmers, saying, '[Surely] they will treat my son with respect.' 38) But when the tenant farmers saw the son, they said to one another, 'This is the heir [to the vineyard]. Come on, let us kill him so we can take over his inheritance.' 39) So, they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40) When the owner of the vineyard returns, what [do you think he] will do to those tenant farmers? 41) They answered him, 'He will bring terrible destruction on those evil men and will lease the vineyard to other tenant farmers who will deliver the crops to him each harvest time.'"

42) Jesus [then] said to the leading priests and elders of the Jewish people, "Did you not ever read in the Scriptures [Psa. 118:22-23], 'The building block rejected by the builders is the same one that was made the principal stone by which the entire building was aligned. This was planned by the Lord and is a marvelous thing to us'? 43) Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you [Jews] and will be given to a nation [i.e., the Gentiles] that will produce the fruit of the kingdom. 44) And the person who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but whoever it falls on will be scattered like dust."

45) And when the leading priests and Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they realized He was speaking about them. 46) When they attempted to arrest Him, [they hesitated because] they feared [what] the crowds [might do], since they considered Jesus a prophet.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1) Jesus again spoke in parables to them [i.e., the Jewish leaders], saying, 2) "The kingdom of heaven is similar to a certain king who held a wedding reception for his son. 3) He sent his servants out to call those who had been invited to the wedding

reception, but they refused to come. 4) Again he sent out other servants saying, 'Tell those who were invited, look, I have already prepared the dinner; my cattle and [other] well-fattened animals have been butchered and everything is ready. [Now] come to the wedding reception dinner.' 5) But they made fun of it, and went on about their business, one to his farm, another to his store. 6) But the rest of them grabbed his servants, physically abused them and [finally] killed them. 7) The king became furious and sent his army to destroy these murderers and burn their city. 8) Then he told his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited to it [proved they] were not worthy [to attend]. 9) Now go to the main crossroads of the highways and invite everyone you find there to the wedding reception.' 10) So, his servants went out to the highways and gathered in all those who could be found, both bad and good, so that the wedding [reception] was full of guests. 11) But when the king came in [to the dining hall] to meet the guests, he noticed a man who was not wearing a [proper] wedding outfit. 12) He said to the man, 'Friend, how did you get in here without wearing the proper wedding outfit?' And he could not say a word. 13) Then the king said to his servants, 'Tie him up, hand and foot, and throw him into [a place of] outer darkness where there will be crying and excruciating pain.' 14) For many people are called [by God] but [only those] few [who respond] are chosen [by Him]."

15) Then the Pharisees conspired as to how they could trap Jesus by what He said. 16) So, they sent their disciples, [along] with the Herodians to Him [Note: These were probably members of a political party favoring King Herod], saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and that you teach the truth about God's way. You do not care for [i.e., do not fear or give in to] anyone or allow the position of any person to influence you. 17) So, tell us what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" 18) But Jesus perceived their wicked intention and said, "Why are you putting me to a test, you hypocrites? 19) Show me the coin used for paying taxes." And they brought to Him a coin [Note: This coin was equivalent to one day of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$60-\$84 in 1994]. 20) He said to them, "Whose image and inscription are on this coin?" 21) They answered Him, "Caesar's." Then He replied, "Pay to Caesar whatever belongs to Caesar and pay to God whatever belongs to God."

22) And when they heard this, they marvelled; then left Him

and went away.

23) Some Sadducees [Note: These were the Jewish party that denied there was a resurrection] came to Jesus that day and asked Him, **24)** "Teacher, Moses said [in Deut. 25:5] that when a man dies without having had any children, his brother must marry his widow and father children by her, who would [then] be considered his [dead] brother's. **25)** Now among our people there were [these] seven brothers; the first one married and [later] died without having any children, leaving his widow to [marry] his brother. **26)** The same thing happened to the second and the third and [on through to] the seventh [brother]. **27)** And after they all died, the woman [also] passed away. **28)** Now whose wife will she be in the resurrected state, since all seven of them were married to her?" **29)** But Jesus answered them, "You are mistaken [n your reasoning], not knowing [what] the Scriptures [teach] or [how much] power God has. **30)** For in the resurrected state men do not get married, nor are women given away in marriage, but [all] are like angels in heaven. **31)** But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what God spoke to you, saying, [Ex. 3:6] **32)** 'I am Abraham's God, and Isaac's God and Jacob's God.' [So], He is not God to those who are [physically] dead, but [He is] God to those who are [still] alive." **33)** And when the crowds heard this they were astounded at His teaching.

34) But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced [the objections of] the Sadducees, they gathered together [i.e., to continue plotting against Jesus. See verse 15]. **35)** One of them, a teacher of the law of Moses, asked Him a question [in an attempt] to test Him. **36)** "Teacher, which one is the greatest commandment in the law of Moses?" he asked. **37)** Jesus replied, [Deut. 6:5] "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.' **38)** This is the foremost and greatest commandment. **39)** A second one, similar to it is [Lev. 19:18], 'You must love your neighbor the same way that you love yourself.' **40)** The entire law of Moses and the prophets hinge on these two commandments."

41) Now while the Pharisees were assembled together, Jesus asked them this question, **42)** "What do you think about the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one]? Whose son do you think He is?" They replied, "[He is] the son of David." **43)** He said to them, "How is it [then] that David, by [inspiration of] the Holy Spirit, calls Him

Lord, saying, 44) [Psa. 110:1] 'The Lord [i.e., God] said to my [i.e., David's] Lord [i.e., Jesus], sit at my right side until I put your enemies [in full subjection] beneath your feet.' 45) If David then could call Him [i.e., Jesus] Lord, how could He be his son?" 46) No one was able to answer [Jesus' reasoning] with [so much as] a word, and no one dared to ask Him any more questions from that day onward.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

1) Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, 2) saying, "The experts in the law of Moses and the Pharisees teach by the authority of Moses. 3) Therefore, observe and practice everything they urge upon you, but do not follow their example [of living] because they say [the right things] but do not do them. 4) Yes, they require people to bear heavy and difficult responsibilities, and place them on people's shoulders [to carry out], but they themselves will not lift a finger to do them. 5) But they do all their deeds just to be seen by people. They wear elaborate Scripture texts displayed on their clothing and enlarge [conspicuously] the fringes of their robes. 6) They love to recline at the head place at dinner tables [Note: This referred to the practice of lying down on their left side on a couch next to the dinner table, and leaning on their left elbow, while eating with their right hand], and to occupy the principal seats in the synagogues. 7) They love the [special] greetings they receive at the open shopping markets and to be addressed as 'Rabbi' [Note: This word signified 'great' or 'master']. 8) But you should not assume the title 'Rabbi,' for [only] one is your teacher [i.e., Jesus Himself] and all of you are [simply] brothers. 9) And do not call any man on earth 'father,' [i.e., in a religious sense], for the [only] one who is your Father is in heaven. 10) Neither assume the title 'Master' [i.e., teacher], for [only] one is your Master, the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one]. 11) But the greatest person among you will be your servant. 12) And whoever exalts himself [as important] will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted [as important].

13) "But it is too bad for you hypocritical experts in the law of Moses and [you] Pharisees! [It is] because you withhold the kingdom of heaven from people, for you do not enter it yourselves, nor [do you] allow those who are trying to enter it to get in. {{Verse 14) is absent from the oldest manuscripts}}.

15) "It is too bad for you hypocritical experts in the law of Moses and [you] Pharisees! For you travel over land and sea [in hope of] making one person a proselyte [i.e., a convert to the Jewish religion]. And when you do convert one, you make him twice as deserving of hell as yourselves.

16) "It is too bad for you blind leaders who say that whoever takes an oath 'by the Temple,' it does not [really] mean anything, but whoever takes an oath 'by the gold of the Temple,' he is obligated to [fulfill] the oath. **17)** You foolish, blind people! Which is greater, the gold or the Temple that makes its gold sacred? **18)** And [you say], whoever takes an oath 'by the Altar,' it does not [really] mean anything, but whoever takes an oath 'by the gift on the Altar,' he is obligated to [fulfill] the oath. **19)** You blind people! Which is more important, the gift or the Altar that makes the gift sacred? **20)** The person, therefore, who takes an oath 'by the Altar,' [not only] swears by it, but [also] by everything on it. **21)** And the person who takes an oath 'by the Temple,' [not only] swears by it, but [also] by Him [i.e., God] who lives there. **22)** And the person who takes an oath 'by heaven,' swears 'by the throne of God,' and [also] by Him [i.e., God] who sits on it.

23) "It is too bad for you hypocritical experts in the law of Moses and [you] Pharisees! For you give a tenth of your mint, dill and cumin [i.e., small garden herbs used for seasoning or fragrance], and [yet] neglect the heavier responsibilities required by the law, [such as] justice, mercy and faith. You should have done these ["lighter"] things and not neglected to do the other ["heavier"] things [as well]. **24)** You blind leaders, who strain out a [tiny] gnat [i.e., from your drinking water] and [yet] swallow a [whole] camel.

25) "It is too bad for you hypocritical experts in the law of Moses and [you] Pharisees! For you [carefully] wash the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they [i.e., such evil people] are full of greed and uncontrolled desire. **26)** You blind Pharisees! First wash the inside of the cup and dish, so [then] the outside will be clean also.

27) "It is too bad for you hypocritical experts in the law of Moses and [you] Pharisees! For you are like white-washed tombs, used for burial [sites], which appear beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are full of the bones and decaying flesh of dead people. **28)** Even so, you also appear on the outside to be doing right in front of people, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and sin.

29) "It is too bad for you hypocritical experts in the law of Moses and [you] Pharisees! For you construct burial sites for the prophets and decorate the tombs of people who were righteous. **30)** And you say, 'If [only] we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we [certainly] would not have participated with them in [shedding] the blood of the prophets.' **31)** [But by saying this] you are witnesses [against] yourselves, that you are the sons of those who murdered the prophets [i.e., indicating your approval of their actions]. **32)** So [then], fulfill the pattern of behavior begun by your forefathers. **33)** You snakes! You children of snakes! How do you expect to escape being judged [and condemned] in hell? **34)** Therefore look, I am sending to you prophets, wise men and scholarly teachers. You will murder and crucify some of them; you will whip some of them in your synagogues and pursue them from town to town. **35)** [This will be done] so that on you may fall the guilt for shedding on the ground the blood of all those innocent people, from the blood of righteous Abel to that of Barachiah's son Zachariah, whom you murdered between the Sanctuary and the Altar [i.e., in the Temple area]. **36)** Truly I tell you, this generation will bear [the guilt for] all these things.

37) "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [you people] who murdered the prophets and stoned those who were sent to you! How often I have wanted to gather you people together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! **38)** Look, your house [i.e., the Jewish Temple] is being abandoned [by me?]. **39)** For I tell you, you will not see me from now on until [the time when] you will be saying, 'Praise the one who is coming in the name of the Lord!'"

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

1) As Jesus left the Temple, His disciples approached Him as He was walking along the road and pointed out the Temple buildings. **2)** He responded to them by saying, "Do you see all these structures? Truly I tell you, there will not be one stone left on another here that will not be thrown down."

3) And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, His disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these

things [you just spoke of] happen? And what will be the sign that indicates your presence and the end of the [present] age?" 4) And Jesus answered them, "Pay attention so that no one leads you astray [from the truth]. 5) For many [false teachers] will come, claiming to be me, and saying, 'I am the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one]' and they will lead many people away [from the truth]. 6) And you will hear of wars [going on] and rumors of [other] wars [pending]. Do not worry, for such things must necessarily happen. But the end has not yet come. [Note: By "the end" here Jesus probably alludes to the downfall of Jerusalem, in AD 70, with its attending destruction of the Temple buildings]. 7) For nations will wage war against one another, and kingdoms will attack one another. And famines and earthquakes will occur at various places [in the world]. 8) But all these things are [only] the beginning of terrible times. 9) At that time people will turn you over [to the authorities] for persecution and will [even] kill you. And people from all countries will hate you for being loyal to me. 10) And then many people will fall away [from God] and they will turn one another over [i.e., to the authorities for punishment], and they will hate one another. 11) And many false prophets will appear and will lead many people away [from the truth]. 12) And because sin will abound, many people will grow cold in their love [for one another]. 13) But the person who holds out [i.e., remains faithful to God] until the end [i.e., of this time of severe persecution] will be saved [from destruction]. 14) And this good news concerning the kingdom [of heaven] will be preached to people throughout the world as a testimony [of God's message] to all nations. Then, [after that] the end [i.e., of Jerusalem, the Temple, etc.], will come.

15) "Therefore, when you see that disgusting thing which causes total destruction [i.e., the Roman armies. See Luke 21:20], which Daniel the prophet spoke about [Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11], standing in the sacred place [i.e., Jerusalem and especially the Temple area], (let the reader understand [what is meant by this]), 16) then those [of you] in Judea are to run away into the [nearby] mountains. 17) [Also], the person who is on a housetop [Note: This was a flat area where people retired for rest, prayer, etc., with its stairway on the outside], is not to take any of the belongings from his house as he comes down [to flee]. 18) The person who is in a field [i.e., doing farm work] is not [even] to return [to his house] to get his coat. 19) It will be too bad for those who are pregnant and who are nursing babies in those days. 20) And pray that

it will not be in the winter or on a Sabbath day when you will have to flee [from the city]. [Note: Jewish Sabbath day restrictions on travel (only three-fifths of a mile) and city gate closures would make leaving the city nearly impossible]. **21)** There will be great trouble [during these times], such as had never been from the beginning of time up to the present, or ever will be [in the days to come]. **22)** And if those days had not been as short as they were no one would have been saved [i.e., from the devastating destruction]. But for the sake of the elect [i.e., God's people], those days will be short. **23)** Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is Christ,' or 'There [he is],' do not believe him. **24)** For false Christs and false prophets will appear and they will perform great [miraculous] signs and [supernatural] wonders in order to lead astray even the elect [i.e., God's people], if possible. **25)** You see, I have told you [all this] ahead of time. **26)** Therefore, if people say to you, 'Look, he [i.e., Christ. See verse 23] is in the desert,' do not go out there. [Or if they say], 'Look, he is in an inside room,' do not believe him. **27)** For just like lightning that appears in the east can be seen even in the west, so it will be with the presence [i.e., coming] of the Son of man. **28)** Wherever there is a dead body, [you can expect to see] vultures gathered there. [Note: This may mean that such a significant event as the coming of Christ would surely not go unnoticed].

29) "But immediately after the terrible trouble of those days, [i.e., the next major event on God's calendar], the sun will become dark, and [therefore] the moon will not [be able to] shed its [reflected] light. The stars will fall from the sky and the forces of the heavens will be shaken [Note: From the description of these same events in Luke 21:25-26, it is possible that this is figurative language for great calamities happening on the earth]. **30)** Then the sign [i.e., signifying the coming] of the Son of man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will be stricken with grief as they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of the sky [See Acts 1:9-11] with power and great splendor. **31)** And He will send out His angels [i.e., as messengers] with the sound of a great trumpet [See I Thess. 4:16] to gather His elect [i.e., God's people] from all directions, [even] from throughout the whole world. [Note: See Mark 13:27, which suggests this thought by its use of 'earth' and 'sky'].

32) "Now learn this parable [i.e., a brief analogy to illustrate a lesson] from the fig tree: When its tender sprouts appear and its leaves begin to develop, you know that summer is near. **33)** In the same way also, when you see all these things happening, you [should]

know that He [i.e., Jesus] is as near as your [front] door. 34) Truly I tell you, the people of this generation will not [all] die off before all these things [i.e., mentioned above] happen. 35) [Although] the sky and the earth will pass away [See II Pet. 3:10], my words will not pass away [i.e., they will certainly come true].

36) "But no one knows when that day or hour will come. Not even the angels in heaven or the Son [of God] know [when it will happen], but only the Father [does]. 37) As it was during the days of Noah, so it will be when the presence of the Son of man [arrives]. 38) For in those days before the Flood, people were eating and drinking [i.e., partaking of ordinary meals], men were getting married and women were being given away in marriage [right up] until the day Noah entered the ship. 39) And the people [i.e., of Noah's day] did not know [when it would happen] until the Flood came and swept them all away. It will be the same way when the presence of the Son of man [arrives]. 40) At that time there will be two men [working] in a field; one will be taken [i.e., to be with the Lord. See I Thess. 4:17], while the other one will be left [i.e., to be punished by the Lord. See II Thess. 1:7-9]. 41) Two women will be grinding grain at a millstone [Note: This was a hand-operated device where two persons sat across from each other and rotated a circular stone over kernels of grain]; one will be taken, while the other one will be left. 42) "Therefore be alert, for you do not know on what day the Lord will come. 43) But you should know this: if the owner of a house had known when a thief was coming, he would have been watching so as not to allow his house to be broken into. 44) Therefore, you also should be ready, for the Son of man will come at a time when you least expect Him.

45) "Who then, is the trustworthy and sensible slave, to whom his master has assigned the management of his household to provide timely meals for its members? 46) That slave will be happy when his master returns to find him doing his job [well]. 47) Truly I tell you, he will put that slave in charge of his entire estate. 48) But if that slave, with evil intent, should think to himself, "My master will not be back very soon," 49) and then becomes physically abusive to his fellow-slaves, and eats and drinks [at parties] with drunkards, 50) that slave's master will return on a day that he least expects, and at an unknown hour. 51) And [that master] will whip him to shreds and will turn him over to suffer the same fate as hypocrites do. That fate will involve crying and excruciating pain."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

1) "Then the kingdom of heaven will be similar to ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went out to meet the [bride and] groom. [Note: The picture here is that of a newly married couple returning from a festive reception to the groom's home where they continued celebrating and were welcomed by a late evening wedding party]. 2) Five of the bridesmaids were foolish and five were sensible. 3) The foolish ones did not take enough olive oil for their lamps with them, 4) but the sensible ones took [extra] oil in containers, along with their lamps. 5) Now when the [bride and] groom were late [in arriving], the bridesmaids all got drowsy and fell asleep. 6) Then at midnight someone shouted, 'Look, the [bride and] groom are here. Come on, let us go out and meet them.' 7) Then all the bridesmaids woke up and trimmed their lamps [i.e., removed the burnt wicks and replenished their lamps with oil]. 8) The foolish ones said to the sensible ones, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.' 9) But the sensible ones answered, 'There might not be enough for us and you, [so] instead, you should go to the store and buy some for yourselves.' 10) And while they were away [trying] to buy olive oil, the [bride and] groom arrived, and those who were ready [to welcome them] entered the [house where the] wedding reception [was being held] and the door was shut. 11) After that, the other bridesmaids also came asking, 'Sir, Sir, [please] open the door for us!' 12) But he answered them, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' 13) Therefore, you should be watchful, for you do not know the day or hour [i.e., when the Son of man will return].

14) "For the kingdom of heaven is similar to a man who planned to go on a trip to a distant country, so called his servants and entrusted to each of them a large sum of money [Note: The narrative that follows suggests that the man was turning over some of his assets to financial managers to invest for him]. 15) He gave one servant five talents [Note: This 'talent' was a large sum of money in the form of a certain weight of silver. It was the equivalent of sixty years of a farm laborer's wages, or about \$750,000 in 1994 income]. He gave two talents to another servant and one talent to another. He gave to each one an amount in keeping with his ability [to invest it wisely], and then left on his trip. 16) The one with the five talents soon invested the money in business transactions which netted him five more. 17) In the same way the one who was given two talents made two more. 18) But the one who was given one talent went and dug a hole in the

ground and buried his master's money. 19) Now after a long time the master of these servants returned [from his trip] and proceeded to go over his accounts with each of them. 20) The one who had been given five talents came bringing another five and reported, 'Master, you entrusted me with five talents. Look, I have earned five more with them.' 21) His master replied, 'Well done, you are a good and trustworthy servant. You have been trustworthy over a [relatively] few things, so I will place you over many things. Come and share in your master's joy.' 22) And the one who was given two talents came and reported, 'Master, you entrusted me with two talents. Look, I have earned two more with them.' 23) His master said to him, 'Well done, you are a good and trustworthy servant. You have been trustworthy over a [relatively] few things, [so] I will place you over many things. Come and share in your master's joy.' 24) Then the one who was given [only] one talent came and reported, 'Master, I knew you were a difficult man who reaped where you had not sown, and gathered a harvest where you had not scattered seed, 25) and I was afraid, so I went away and hid your talent in the ground. Look, you [can] have your own talent [back].' 26) But his master said to him, 'You wicked, lazy servant. [Since] you knew that I reaped where I had not sown and gathered where I had not scattered seed, 27) you should have therefore deposited my money in the bank [so] when I returned, [at least] I would have received my own money back, with interest. 28) Take the one talent away from him, therefore, and give it to the servant who had the ten talents. 29) For to every person who has [something], more will be given, so he will have plenty. But from the person who has [virtually] nothing, even that [little bit] he has will be taken away [from him]. 30) Throw out that worthless servant into the [place of] outer darkness, where there will be crying and excruciating pain.

31) "But when the Son of man comes [back] in [all] His splendor, accompanied by all the angels, then He will sit on His throne of splendor. 32) And people from all the nations will be assembled in front of Him and He will separate them from one another, like a shepherd separating his sheep from the goats. 33) He will place the sheep at His right side, but the goats at His left. 34) Then the King will say to those at His right side, 'You who are blessed by my Father, come and receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you since the creation of the world, 35) for [when] I was

hungry, you fed me; [when] I was thirsty, you gave me [something] to drink; [when] I came [to you as] a stranger, you gave me a place to stay; 36) when I was without adequate clothing, you gave me something to wear; [when] I was sick, you came to visit me; [when] I was in prison, you came to see me.' 37) Then those who had done what was right [i.e., the ones at His right side] replied, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you? Or thirsty, and give you [something] to drink? 38) And when [did you come as] a stranger, and we gave you a place to stay? Or [when were you] without adequate clothing, and we gave you something to wear? 39) And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to visit you?' 40) And the King will answer them and say, 'Truly I tell you, since you did all this for one of my least [significant] brothers, you did it for me.' 41) Then He [i.e., the King] will say to those at His left side, 'Go away from me, you who are cursed [by God], into the never ending fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. 42) For [when] I was hungry, you did not feed me; [when] I was thirsty, you did not give me anything to drink; 43) [when] I came [to you as] a stranger, you did not give me a place to stay; [when I] did not have adequate clothing, you did not give me anything to wear; when I was sick, or in prison, you did not visit me.' 44) They will reply, 'Lord, when did we [ever] see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or inadequately dressed, or sick, or in prison, and not provide for your needs?' 45) Then the Lord will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, since you did not do it for one of these least [significant brothers of mine], you did not do it for me.' 46) And these [i.e., the ones at His left side] will go away to never ending punishment, but those who did what was right will go to never ending life."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

1) And it happened when Jesus had finished all this teaching, He said to His disciples, 2) "You know that the Passover Festival will be celebrated in two more days [Note: This was the annual Jewish festival commemorating Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage under Moses' leadership], and the Son of man will be turned over to be crucified." 3) Then the leading priests and elders of the [Jewish] people were gathered in the courtroom of the head priest, named Caiaphas. 4) They were taking

counsel together as to how they might take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. 5) But they reasoned, "We will not do it during the Festival because it might start a riot among the people."

6) Now when Jesus was at Bethany [Note: This was a small village less than two miles east of Jerusalem], in the house of Simon, the man [who probably had been healed] of an infectious skin disease, 7) a woman with an alabaster [i.e., stone] jar of very expensive perfume came to Him and poured it on His head as He reclined at the dinner table. [Note: See Matt. 23:6]. 8) But when His disciples saw this they were very upset and said, "What is the reason for such waste? 9) For this perfume could have been sold for a large sum of money and given to poor people." 10) But Jesus was aware [of what they were up to], so said, "Why are you bothering this woman? For she has done a kind deed to me. 11) You will always have poor people with you, but you will not always have me. 12) For in the act of pouring this perfume on my body she was preparing it for my burial. 13) Truly I tell you, wherever this Gospel [message] is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done [for me] will [also] be told about, as a memorial of her [kindness to me]."

14) Then one of the twelve apostles, named Judas Iscariot, went to the leading priests 15) and said, "What would you give me if I turned Jesus over to you?" And they weighed out thirty silver coins [Note: This amount was equivalent to about five months of a farm laborer's wages, or approximately \$7,000 in 1994], and promised [See Mark 14:11] to give him that much money. 16) So, from then on Judas looked for a [good] opportunity to turn Jesus over [to the Jewish leaders].

17) Now on the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread [i.e., the first day of Passover week], His disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover meal?" 18) He answered, "Go into the city [i.e., Jerusalem] to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is near [i.e., to be turned over to the Jewish leaders]; I plan to observe the Passover Festival at your house with my disciples.'" 19) And the disciples did [just] as Jesus had asked them, and they made preparations for the Passover meal.

20) Now when evening came, Jesus was reclining at the dinner table with His twelve apostles. 21) As they were eating, He said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will turn me over [to the Jewish leaders]." 22) And they were extremely grieved, and each one of them

began saying to Him, "Am I the one, Lord?" 23) He answered, "The one who dipped his hand with me into the [sauce] bowl is the one who will turn me over [to the Jewish leaders]." 24) The Son of man is going [to die], but it is too bad for that person through whom the Son of man is turned over [to the Jewish leaders]! It would be better for that man if he had not been born." 25) Then Judas, the one who betrayed Him asked, "Am I the one, Rabbi?" Jesus answered Him, "You have said so."

26) And as they were eating, Jesus took a [small] loaf of bread, asked God's blessing on it, then broke it and gave pieces to His disciples and said, "Take some and eat it; this is [i.e., represents] my [physical] body." 27) And He took a cup [i.e., probably wine made from fresh or possibly preserved grape juice], gave thanks to God, then passed it to them, saying, "All of you, drink from it; 28) for this is [i.e., represents] my blood of the Agreement [i.e., between God and mankind], which is [to be] poured out for many people in order for [their] sins to be forgiven. 29) But I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine [i.e., grape juice] from now on until that day when I will drink it again with you [i.e., figuratively] in my Father's kingdom."

30) And after they had sung a hymn, they went up to the Mount of Olives. [Note: This was a small hill just east of Jerusalem].

31) Then Jesus said [to His disciples], "All of you will have doubts about me tonight, for it is written [Zech. 13:7], 'I will strike down the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered everywhere.' 32) But after I am raised up, I will go on ahead of you to Galilee." 33) Peter answered Him, "[Even] if everyone [else] has doubts about you, I never will." 34) Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this [very] night, before the rooster crows, you will deny [knowing] me three times." 35) Peter replied to Him, "Even if I have to die with you, still I will not deny [knowing] you." And all [the rest of] the disciples said the same thing.

36) Then Jesus came with His disciples to a place called Gethsemene. [Note: This was an olive orchard on a hillside just east of Jerusalem]. He said to them, "You sit here while I go over there and pray." 37) He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee [i.e., James and John] with Him, and [soon] began to be grieved and very distressed. 38) Then He said to them, "My soul is extremely grieved, even to [the point where I could] die. Stay here and be alert with me [i.e., in prayer]."

39) And He went on ahead a short distance and fell face-down and prayed, "My Father, allow this cup [i.e., of suffering] to pass away from me if it is [at all] possible; nevertheless, let it not be what I want, but what You want [for me]."

40) And [when] He came [back] to where His disciples were and found them asleep, He said to Peter, "What [is this], could you not remain alert with me [in prayer] for one hour? **41)** Be alert and pray, so that you do not give in to temptation; the spirit [of a person] is truly willing [i.e., to do a certain thing], but his physical nature is [often too] weak [to carry it out]."

42) He [then] went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if this [cup of suffering] cannot pass away unless I drink it [i.e., experience the suffering], [then] let what You want be done."

43) And He came [back] again and found them asleep, because they had not been able to keep their eyes open. **44)** He left and went away from them again and prayed a third time, saying the same words again.

45) Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Go ahead and sleep now, and get your rest. See, the time is near and the Son of man is [about to be] turned over into the hands of sinners. **46)** Get up, let us be going. Look, the one who will turn me over [to the Jewish leaders] is nearby."

47) And while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve apostles, came with a large crowd who were carrying swords and clubs. They had come from the leading priests and elders of the [Jewish] people. **48)** Now the one who betrayed Him had given them a signal, saying, "Whoever I give a kiss [of greeting to], he is the one, take hold of him." **49)** So, immediately he went to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi," and [then] kissed Him [enthusiastically]. **50)** And Jesus said to him, "[My] friend, [go ahead], do what you came to do."

Then the Jewish officers came and arrested Jesus and began taking Him away. **51)** Just then, one of those who were with Jesus [i.e., Peter. See John 18:10], reached out with his sword and struck the head priest's servant [with it], shearing off his ear. **52)** Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back in your belt again, for all those who use the sword will die by the sword. **53)** Or, do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father and He will immediately send me more than twelve legions of angels [i.e., Jesus could have called about 72,000 angels to minister to Him. See Matt. 4:11]? **54)** How [else]

then should the Scriptures be fulfilled that this must happen [than what is taking place]?"

55) [Then] Jesus said to the crowds at that very time, "Have you come out to arrest me with swords and clubs as [you would apprehend] a thief? I sat everyday teaching in the Temple, and you did not [come to] take me. **56)** But all this has happened so that the Scriptures of the prophets would be fulfilled." Then all of His disciples left Him and ran away.

57) And those who had arrested Jesus led Him away to the house of Caiaphas, the head priest, where the experts in the law of Moses and the [Jewish] elders were gathered. **58)** But Peter followed Him from a distance [as they were going] to the courtyard of the head priest. He went inside [i.e., eventually. See John 18:15-16] and sat down with the [Jewish] officers to see how things would turn out [i.e., with Jesus' trial].

59) Now the leading priests and the entire Council [called "the Sanhedrin"] looked for false witnesses [to testify] against Jesus, in order to put Him to death. **60)** But they did not find any [i.e., whose stories harmonized. See Mark 14:56], even though many false witnesses came [forward to testify]. Finally, two [false witnesses] came forward **61)** and said, "This man [i.e., Jesus] said, 'I can destroy the Temple of God, and [then] rebuild it within three days.'"

62) The head priest stood up and said to Him, "Have you nothing to answer? What about this charge being made against you by these people?" **63)** But Jesus did not say anything. So, the head priest said to Him, "I command you [to swear] by the living God, [and] to tell us if you are the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one], the Son of God!" **64)** Jesus replied to him, "You have said so; nevertheless I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of man sitting at the right side of Power [i.e., God Himself], and coming on the clouds of the sky."

65) Then the head priest tore at his clothing [i.e., as an expression of frustration], saying, "He has spoken against God [i.e., by claiming Deity for Himself]. What additional need do we have for witnesses? Look, you [yourselves] have now heard him speaking against God. **66)** What do you people think [i.e., about such statements]?" They answered, "He deserves to die."

67) Then they spit in His face and hit Him [with their fists], while others slapped Him [in the face], **68)** saying, "Prophecy to us,

you 'Christ.' Tell us who hit you?" [Note: By this time Jesus had been blindfolded. See Mark 14:65].

69) Now Peter was sitting outside in a courtyard and a servant-girl approached him and said, "You also were with Jesus, the Galilean." 70) But he denied [it] in front of all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about."

71) And when he had gone out by the gate, another servant-girl saw him and said to those nearby, "This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72) And he denied [it] again, [this time] with an oath, saying, "I do not [even] know the man."

73) And a little later, those standing nearby came to Peter and said, "[We know] for sure, you also are one of them [i.e., Jesus' disciples], because your accent gives you away." 74) Then Peter began to curse and swear, "[I tell you], I do not know the man." And immediately a rooster crowed. 75) Then Peter remembered the words Jesus had said, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny [knowing] me three times." And he went out and cried bitterly.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

1) Now when morning came, all the leading priests and the elders of the [Jewish] people conferred together against Jesus as to how they might put Him to death. 2) So, they chained Him, led Him away and turned Him over to Pilate, the [Roman] governor.

3) Then Judas, who had betrayed Him [to the Jewish leaders], when he saw that Jesus had been condemned to die, changed his mind [i.e., about betraying Him] and brought back the thirty silver coins [Note: See Matt. 26:15 for the amount of money involved] to the leading priests and [Jewish] elders, 4) saying, "I have sinned by delivering up an innocent man to die." But they replied, "What is that to us? It is your affair!" 5) And he threw down the thirty silver coins in the Sanctuary [i.e., probably the outer area of the Temple], then left and went out and hanged himself. 6) The leading priests took the silver coins and said, "It is not permissible by the law of Moses to put this money in the Temple treasury, since it is the price [paid] for [taking] a life. 7) So, they conferred together [and decided] to buy "The Potter's Field" with the money [Note: This was probably an abandoned field where clay had been obtained for making pottery], for use in burying people who were not from

the local area. 8) So, that field is called, "The Field of Blood" to this day. 9) [Thus the prophecy] spoken by Jeremiah, the prophet [Note: The passage actually appears to be Zech. 11:12-13], was fulfilled which said, "And they took the thirty silver coins, the amount charged for Him on whom certain Israelites had set a price, 10) and gave the money for 'The Potter's Field,' as the Lord directed me."

11) Now Jesus stood in front of the governor [i.e., Pilate], who asked Him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus answered him, "You have said so." 12) When He was accused by the leading priests and the [Jewish] elders, He made no reply. 13) Pilate then said to Him, "Do you not hear how many charges the witnesses are bringing against you?" 14) But He [again] made no reply, not even to a single charge, which caused the governor to be greatly amazed.

15) Now at the [Passover] Festival, the governor was accustomed to releasing whatever prisoner the crowd wanted. 16) There was at that time in custody a notorious prisoner named Barabbas. 17) Therefore, when the people had gathered together, Pilate asked them, "Whom do you want me to release, Barabbas or Jesus, who is called 'Christ'?" 18) For he knew that the reason they had turned Jesus over to him was out of envy. 19) Then while he was seated in Pilate's courtroom of justice, his wife sent [word] to him, saying, "You should have nothing to do with that innocent man. For I was very troubled in a dream over him today." [Note: That is, she was troubled over a dream she had before waking up that morning]. 20) Now the leading priests and [Jewish] elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas [to be released] and for Jesus to be killed. 21) But the governor asked them, "Which one of these two men do you want me to release to you?" And they answered, "Barabbas." 22) Pilate replied, "Then what should I do to Jesus, who is called 'Christ'?" They all shouted, "Let him be crucified!" 23) And he said, "Why [should he be]? What wrong has he done?" But they shouted out even louder, "Let him be crucified!"

24) So, when Pilate saw that he was not convincing anyone, but that a riot was brewing instead, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd saying, "I am not responsible for this man's blood. [Note: Some ancient manuscripts say "righteous man's blood"]. You tend to the matter." 25) And all the people answered, "Let his blood be on our hands, and on our children's [as well]." 26) Then he released Barabbas to them, but he had Jesus flogged and then turned over to

be crucified.

27) Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus to Pilate's headquarters and assembled the entire company [i.e., about 500 men] in front of Him. **28)** They stripped off His clothing and placed a scarlet robe on Him [Note: Mark 15:17 calls this a "purple" robe because in that day, any color with a mixture of "red" in it was often called "purple," so the use of "scarlet" was appropriate]. **29)** Then they made a wreath out of thorns and placed it on His head and put a stick in His right hand. They knelt down in front of Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hey, king of the Jews!" **30)** And they spat on Him and took the stick and beat Him on the head with it. **31)** And after mocking Him [some more], they removed the [scarlet] robe and put His own clothes back on Him. Then they led Him away to crucify Him.

32) As they were leaving [i.e., probably the city of Jerusalem], they met a man from Cyrene [Note: This was a city in the northern African country of Libya]. His name was Simon and they forced him to go with them so he could carry Jesus' cross [i.e., probably only the cross-beam portion].

33) And when they had come to the place called *Golgotha*, which means "the place of a skull" [i.e., probably because it was a skull-shaped knoll in appearance], **34)** they offered Jesus wine mixed with a bitter drug [i.e., for the purpose of dulling the pain of crucifixion. Mark 15:23 calls it "myrrh"], but when He tasted it He refused to drink it. **35)** And after they had crucified Him, the soldiers divided His clothing among themselves by gambling for them. **36)** Then they just sat there and watched Him [die]. **37)** They attached over His head [i.e., to the upright portion of the cross] the charge made against Him, which read, "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews." **38)** They [also] crucified two thieves with Him, one at His right side and one at His left. **39)** And those who passed by [the cross] shouted abuse at Him and shook their heads [in derision], **40)** saying, "You who [said you] would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself [from dying]; if you [really] are the Son of God, come down from the cross." **41)** In the same way the leading priests, experts in the law of Moses and [Jewish] elders also mocked Him, saying, **42)** "He saved other people, [but] he cannot [even] save himself [i.e., from dying]. He is 'the king of Israel;' let him now come down from the cross and then we will believe in him. **43)** He trusted in God; now let God deliver him, if He wants [to save him from

dying], for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" 44) And the thieves who were crucified with Him also heaped the same abuse on Him.

45) Now from noon until three o'clock in the afternoon there was darkness over all the land. 46) Then about three in the afternoon Jesus called out in a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama, sabachthani?*

[Note: These words were spoken in the commonly used Aramaic language], which mean, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? 47) And when some of those standing there heard this, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." 48) And immediately one of them ran and got a sponge, soaked it in sour wine and, attaching it to a stick, [lifted it up] and offered Jesus a drink. 49) But the rest of them said, "Let him alone; let us see if Elijah [really] comes to save him."

50) Then Jesus called out again with a loud voice and [finally] gave up His spirit [to God. See Luke 23:46]. 51) Just then the Temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom, the ground shook, and rocks were split open. 52) Graves opened up and the bodies of many dead saints [i.e., God's holy people] were raised up [from the dead]. 53) They came out of their graves after Jesus' resurrection and entered the holy city [i.e., Jerusalem] where they appeared to many people.

54) Now when the military man in charge, and those with him who were watching Jesus, saw [and felt] the earthquake and the [other] things that happened, they became extremely fearful, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God."

55) And many women, who had followed Jesus from Galilee and had ministered to His needs, were watching [all this] from a distance. 56) Among them were Mary from Magdala; Mary, the mother of James and Joseph [i.e., probably the wife of Clopas. See John 19:25]; and the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee [i.e., Salome. Mark 15:40].

57) And when evening had come, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was also one of Jesus' disciples, 58) went to [governor] Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. So, Pilate ordered that it be given to him. 59) Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth 60) and placed it in his own newly prepared grave, which he had cut out of [a ledge of] rock. Then he [had] a huge stone rolled across the entrance of the grave and went away. 61) Mary from Magdala and the other Mary [i.e., probably Jesus' mother. See verse 56], stood near the grave site.

62) Now on the following day, which was the day after the Preparation [for the Passover Festival], the leading priests and Pharisees assembled in front of Pilate 63) and said, "Sir, we remember what that deceiver said while he was still alive: 'I will rise [from the dead] after three days.' 64) Therefore, give the order to secure the grave site until the third day, so his disciples will not steal his body and then tell the people 'He has risen from the dead.' This last deception would be worse than the first one [i.e., the claim that Jesus rose from the dead would be worse than the claim that he was the Messiah]." 65) Pilate said to them, "Take [a group of] guards [with you]; go and make the grave site as secure as you can." 66) So, they went and secured the grave site, placing a [wax] seal on the stone, while the guards watched.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

1) Now as the Sabbath day ended and the first day of the week [i.e., Sunday] approached [Note: See Mark 16:1-2 for the exact timing], Mary from Magdala and the other Mary [i.e., Jesus' mother. See Matt. 27:56] went to look at the grave site.

2) Now there had been a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord had descended from heaven and, [having] come to roll away the stone, was [now] sitting on it. 3) He appeared as [brilliant] lightning and his clothing was white as snow. 4) And the guards shook with fear at seeing him, and became as dead men. 5) The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know you are looking for Jesus, who has been crucified. 6) He is not here, for He has risen just as He said [He would]. Come and see the place where the Lord had been lying, 7) then go quickly and tell His disciples, 'He has risen from the dead and is [now] going on ahead of you into Galilee. You will see Him there.' Now [that is all] I have to tell you." 8) So, they left the grave site quickly, with fear and great joy, and ran to give the message to His disciples. 9) Suddenly Jesus met them and gave them greetings. They approached Him and took hold of His feet [and knelt] to worship Him. 10) Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers [i.e., the disciples, that you have seen me], so they can head for Galilee where they will see me."

11) Now while these women were on their way, some of the

guards entered the city and began telling the leading priests everything that had happened. 12) And when they had assembled with the [Jewish] elders and conferred with them, they offered large sums of money to the soldiers, 13) saying, "We want you to say, 'Jesus' disciples came at night and stole his body while we were asleep.' 14) And if the governor hears about this [plot], we will persuade him [i.e., not to punish you for negligence], so you will not have to worry about that." 15) So, they took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story [i.e., that Jesus' body had been stolen by His disciples] was told widely among the Jews, and continues to be told to this day.

16) But the eleven disciples [i.e., apostles] went to the mountain in Galilee where Jesus had ordered them to go. 17) And when they met Him [there], they [knelt down] to worship Him; but some [of the twelve still] had doubts [i.e., about His resurrection. See John 20:25]. 18) Then Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19) So, as you go, make disciples out of people from all the nations, then immerse believers [See Mark 16:15-16] into the name of [i.e., to enter a relationship with] the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20) [Then] go on teaching them [i.e., these new converts] to obey everything I have commanded you and my presence will be with you always, even to the end of the age.

MARK

CHAPTER ONE

1) This is [how] the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, began.

2) It was even written in Isaiah, the prophet [Isa. 41:3], "Look, I am sending my messenger on ahead of you. He will prepare the way for you. 3) He will be the voice of a man shouting out in the desert, [urging people] to make the road for the Lord ready [to travel on]; to make a straight pathway for him." 4) John [the Immerser] came immersing people in the desert and proclaiming that those immersed on the basis of their repentance would receive the forgiveness of sins [from God]. 5) And people from throughout all the regions of Judea and all of Jerusalem went out to John [in the desert]. And he immersed them in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. 6) John wore clothing made of camel's hair and he had a leather belt around his waist. He ate grasshoppers and wild honey. 7) In his preaching John said, "One who is more powerful than I am will follow my ministry. I am not [even] worthy to stoop down and loosen the straps of His sandals [i.e., to serve as His slave]. 8) I am immersing you in water, but He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit."

9) And it happened at that time that Jesus went from Nazareth, in Galilee [i.e., south to Judea], where He was immersed by John in the Jordan River. 10) And immediately upon emerging from the water, He saw the sky split open and the Holy Spirit descending on Him as a dove. 11) And a voice called out from heaven, saying, "You are my dearly loved Son. I am very pleased with you."

12) Then right after that the Holy Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert. 13) He spent forty days in this desert where He was put to the test by Satan. He was with wild animals, and angels ministered to His needs [while there].

14) Now after John was turned over [i.e., to the authorities and imprisoned] Jesus went [back] to Galilee preaching the good news from God 15) and saying, "The appointed time has arrived and the kingdom of God is near. So, you people should repent [i.e, change your hearts and lives] and believe the good news [about the

kingdom]."

16) And while walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, Jesus saw Simon [i.e., Peter] and his brother Andrew casting their net in the lake, for they were fishermen. 17) And Jesus said to them, "Come, follow me and I will make you fishermen for people." 18) So, they left their nets immediately and became His followers. 19) Then, as He walked on a little farther, He saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John, who were in their boat repairing nets. 20) Immediately He called them [to become His followers] and they left their father, Zebedee, and went along with Him.

21) So, they went to Capernaum [Note: This was a city in Galilee that later became Jesus' headquarters while in Galilee. See verse 29 and 2:1], and on the [first] Sabbath day Jesus entered the synagogue and taught people. 22) They were amazed at His teaching for He taught them as one who had [real] authority, and not as the experts in the law of Moses. 23) And just then there appeared in the synagogue a man dominated by an evil spirit. He shouted out, 24) "What business do we have with you, Jesus from Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are; [you are] God's Holy One." 25) Jesus spoke sternly to him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him." 26) And the evil spirit caused the man to have a convulsion, then shouted with a loud voice and came out of him. 27) And all the people [in the synagogue] were so amazed they began asking one another, "What is this, some new teaching? And it is spoken with such authority! He even orders evil spirits, and they obey him." 28) And news about Him quickly spread everywhere, [even] into all of Galilee and the surrounding regions.

29) And as soon as they left the synagogue, they went into the house of Simon [i.e., Peter] and Andrew, taking James and John with them. 30) Now Simon's mother-in-law was sick [in bed] with a fever. Immediately, Jesus was told about her [condition] 31) so He went to her, took her by the hand and raised her up [from bed]. The fever left her and she began serving them.

32) When evening came and the sun had set, they brought to Jesus all those who were sick and those dominated by evil spirits. 33) And people from all over the city [of Capernaum] gathered at the door of the house, 34) and He healed many of those who were sick with various diseases and drove out many evil spirits. But He did not permit the evil spirits to tell people [who He was], because they knew who He was [i.e., the Christ].

35) Very early in the morning, [even] before daylight, Jesus woke up, left Simon's house [verse 29] and went out to a deserted place where He prayed. **36)** And Simon and those who were with him [i.e., probably Andrew, James and John. See verse 29] followed Him. **37)** When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for you." **38)** He said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns so that I can preach there also, for this was why I came out [i.e., Jesus was sent by God to preach to other towns as well as Capernaum. See Luke 4:43]." **39)** So, Jesus went into the [Jewish] synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching [the good news about the coming kingdom, verses 14-15] and driving out evil spirits.

40) Then a person with an infectious skin disease came to Jesus and, kneeling down before Him, begged Him, saying, "If you want to, you can heal me." [Note: Throughout this narrative the term "heal/healing" is originally "clean/cleansing" because the Jews viewed a person with such a disease as ceremonially "unclean." See Lev. 13:1-3]. **41)** And being moved with deep pity, Jesus reached out His hand, touched him and said, "I do want to; be healed." **42)** And immediately the infectious skin disease left him and he was healed. **43)** Jesus sternly warned him, sending him directly out, **44)** and saying to him, "Make sure you do not say anything to anyone. But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your healing with whatever Moses ordered [Lev. 14:1-9], as evidence to people [that you were completely healed]." **45)** But [instead] the man went out telling everyone about the miracle of healing and spreading the story widely, so that Jesus was not able to enter a town publicly but had to remain outside in deserted places. [So], people went to Him there from all over the region.

CHAPTER TWO

1) After Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, it became known that He was [back] at home [i.e., possibly at the house of Peter and Andrew, where He was staying. See 1:29]. **2)** And there were so many people gathered to listen to His message that there was no room for any more [in the courtyard] around the doorway. **3)** Then some people came, bringing a man afflicted with paralysis, who was being carried by four friends. **4)** And when they were unable to get near Jesus, because of the [large] crowd, they removed [a section of] the roof [directly above Him]. [Note: The roof was a flat area, where people retired

for rest, prayer, etc., and easily accessible from an outside stairway]. And when they had broken open [a sizable hole], they lowered the cot on which the paralyzed man was lying. 5) When Jesus saw [the evidence of] their faith, He said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

6) But certain experts in the law of Moses, who were sitting there, began reasoning in their minds, 7) "Why does this man talk this way? He is speaking against God. Who can forgive sins except one, that is, God?" 8) And immediately Jesus perceived in His spirit what they were reasoning in their minds and said to them, "Why are you reasoning like this in your minds? 9) Which is easier, to say to the paralyzed man, 'your sins are forgiven,' or to say 'get up, pick up your cot and walk'? 10) But, so you will know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins (He then said to the paralyzed man), 11) 'I say to you, get up, pick up your cot and go home.'" 12) So, he got up and immediately picked up his cot and walked out in front of them all, so that everyone was amazed and gave honor to God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this before."

13) Then Jesus went out again, walking along the shore of the lake, and [when] all the crowd came out to Him, He taught them. 14) And as He walked along He saw Levi [i.e., the same person as Matthew. See Matt. 9:9], the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the toll booth [i.e., collecting taxes]. He said to him, "Become my follower." And he got up and followed Him.

15) And it happened that Jesus was having a meal at Levi's house and many tax collectors and worldly people sat down with Him and His disciples, for many [of these kinds of people] became His followers. 16) And when the experts in the law of Moses, being Pharisees [i.e., a strict sect of the Jewish religion], saw that He was eating with tax collectors and worldly people, they said to His disciples, "Why does Jesus eat and drink with tax collectors and worldly people?" 17) When Jesus heard [about] this, He said to them, "People who are healthy do not need a doctor, but [only] sick people do. I did not come to call those who do right, but sinners [instead]."

18) Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, [i.e., going without food and/or drink for religious reasons]. Some people came and asked Jesus, "Why do John's disciples and the Pharisees' disciples fast, but your disciples do not?" 19) Jesus answered them, "Can the companions of the groom fast while the groom is still with them? As long as they have the groom with them they cannot fast. 20)

But the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them. Then they will fast at that time.

21) "No one sows a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, because what was supposed to cover the hole [actually] makes it larger. The new [piece of cloth] tears away from the old one and the hole is made worse. 22) And no one puts freshly squeezed grape juice into bottles made of previously used animal skins. If he does, the grape juice will [cause cracks and] burst the [dried-out] animal skins and the grape juice [will all leak out and] be wasted, and the animal skin bottles will become useless. But people put freshly squeezed grape juice into newly prepared animal skin bottles."

23) And it happened that Jesus was walking through the grainfields on the Sabbath day and His disciples began picking off heads of grain [to eat] as they traveled along. [Note: It was an accepted custom for people in that day to be permitted to do this as they walked along the paths bordering a grainfield]. 24) And the Pharisees asked Him, "Look, why are they [i.e., Jesus' disciples] doing what is against the law of Moses on the Sabbath day?" 25) And He replied to them, "Did you ever read what King David did when he and his men were hungry and needed something to eat? [See I Sam. 21:6]. 26) Or how he entered the house of God [i.e., the Temple] when Abiathar was head priest, and ate the 'Bread of Presence' which was not permissible, according to the law of Moses, for anyone but priests? He even gave [some of it] to those who were with him." 27) And Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath day was made for man's [benefit], and not man for the Sabbath [day's benefit]. 28) So, the Son of man is lord [i.e., has authority] even over the Sabbath day."

CHAPTER THREE

1) And Jesus entered the synagogue again and there He met a man with a deformed hand. 2) And the Pharisees were watching Him to see if He would heal the man on the Sabbath day, so that they could [find a reason to] accuse Him. 3) And He said to the man whose hand was deformed, "Step forward." 4) Then He said to the Pharisees, "Is it permissible by the law of Moses to do something good, or something harmful on the Sabbath day? To save a life or to kill it?" But they did not reply. 5) And when He had looked around at them with righteous indignation, being grieved over their

stubbornness, He said to the man, "Reach out your hand." And when he reached it out, his hand was restored [to normal use]. 6) And the Pharisees immediately went out and conferred with the Herodians against Jesus, plotting how they could kill Him [Note: These Herodians were probably members of a political party favoring King Herod].

7) [Then] Jesus withdrew [from there] with His disciples and went to the lake [i.e., Lake of Galilee], being followed by a large crowd from Galilee. Also, a large crowd from Judea, 8) Jerusalem, Idumaea, the east side of the Jordan River, and from around Tyre and Sidon [i.e., cities on the northwest coast of Palestine] came to Him, having heard about the great things [i.e., miracles] He had been performing. 9) He told His disciples to have a small boat waiting for Him [i.e., from which He could address the people. See 4:1], to prevent His being thronged by the large crowd. 10) For He had healed so many people that large numbers of them who were plagued with serious illnesses were crowding around Him in hope of getting to touch Him.

11) And whenever they saw Him, [people possessed by] evil spirits fell to the ground in front of Him, shouting, "You are the Son of God." 12) But He sternly ordered them not to reveal His identity.

13) He then went up into the mountain and summoned those He wanted to come to Him and they came. 14) He appointed twelve apostles to travel with Him, whom He could send out to preach 15) and have authority to drive out evil spirits. 16) These apostles were: Simon, to whom He gave the added name Peter, 17) James and his brother John, the sons of Zebedee, to whom He gave the added name Boanerges, which means "Sons of Thunder," 18) Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew [i.e., the same as Nathaniel. See John 1:45], Matthew [i.e., the same as Levi. See Mark 2:14], Thomas [i.e., the same as Didymus. See John 11:16], James, the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus [i.e., the same as Judas, the son of James. See Luke 6:16], Simon the Canaanean [i.e., the same as the Zealot. See Luke 6:15], 19) and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

Then Jesus went into a house. 20) Soon a crowd assembled again so that they could not even eat a meal [i.e., without people crowding all around them]. 21) When His relatives [or friends] heard about this [i.e., all that He was doing], they went out to take custody of Him [for safety reasons?], for people were saying, "He has lost his mind."

22) And the experts in the law of Moses that had come down from Jerusalem were saying [Note: This followed the incident of Jesus healing a man with an evil spirit. See Matt. 12:22-28], "He has Beelzebub [in him]," and "He is driving out evil spirits by [the power of] the chief of evil spirits." 23) And He called them to Him and began speaking to them in parables [i.e., brief stories to illustrate His teaching], saying, "How can Satan drive out Satan? 24) And if a kingdom is plagued by internal division, it will never survive. 25) And if a household is divided [by strife] within, that household will never last. 26) And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided [i.e., in aim and purpose] he cannot survive, and his end has come. 27) But no one can enter a strong man's house and steal his belongings unless he first ties up the strong man. Only then will he be able to steal from his house. 28) Truly I tell you, all of mankind's sins and the abusive language that they use in speaking against God [and men] can be forgiven. 29) But the person who speaks against the Holy Spirit can never be forgiven, for he is guilty of a never ending sin." 30) Jesus said all this because these experts in the law of Moses had been saying, "He has an evil spirit in him."

31) Then Jesus' mother and [half-] brothers came and stood outside [i.e., of a large house. See Matt. 12:46-13:1]. They sent a message to Him, asking Him to come out to them. 32) Someone in the large crowd that was sitting around Him said to Him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are outside looking for you." 33) He answered them, "Who is my mother and who are my brothers?" 34) Then He looked out over those gathered around Him and said, "Look, [here is] my mother and my brothers! 35) For whoever will do what God wants, that person is my brother, and sister and mother."

CHAPTER FOUR

1) Jesus again began teaching along the shore of the lake [of Galilee]. A huge crowd gathered around Him so that He had to sit in a boat out in the lake [to speak to them], while all the crowd stood on the shore. 2) He taught the people many things using parables [to illustrate His lessons]. In His teaching He said to them, 3) "Listen carefully! A farmer went out to plant seed, 4) and it happened, as he sowed [i.e., scattering the seed by hand], some of it fell by the side of

the road and birds came and ate it. 5) And some seed fell on rocky ground where there was not much soil, and immediately it sprouted up because the soil was so shallow. 6) But when the sun came up the newly sprouted plants were scorched, and because they had no roots, [soon] withered away. 7) And other seeds fell among thorns which grew up and choked them so that they yielded no crop. 8) Then other seeds fell into fertile soil, and growing up to maturity, they yielded an ever increasing crop. They produced thirty, sixty and even a hundred times [as much as was planted]." 9) And Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear with ought to listen [to this] carefully."

10) And when He was alone those people who gathered around Him, along with the twelve apostles, asked Him what the parables meant. 11) He said to them, "You disciples are being given an understanding of the secret of the kingdom of God, but to outsiders everything will be told in parables. 12) This is so that even though they see, they will see and yet not perceive. And even though they hear, they will hear and yet not understand. For if they did, they would turn [back to God] again and receive forgiveness."

13) And Jesus continued to speak to them, "Do you not know what this parable means? Then how can you understand any of the other parables? 14) A farmer planted 'the word' [i.e., the message of God]. 15) Some of the seed that fell along the roadside represents where 'the word' was sown [i.e., preached]. When these people have heard, immediately Satan comes and takes away 'the word' which had been sown in them. 16) And in the same way, some [of the seed] that was sown on rocky soil represented those who heard 'the word' and immediately accepted it gladly, 17) but [since] they had such shallow roots, they continued on for [only] a little while. Then, when trouble and persecution arose over [obeying] 'the word,' immediately they stumbled [i.e., and fell away from God]. 18) And other seeds represent those who are sown among thorns. These are people who heard 'the word,' 19) but worry [over things] of the world, and the deceitfulness of material wealth, and the evil desires for other things entered their hearts and choked [the effectiveness of] 'the word,' so that it did not yield a crop [in their lives]. 20) Then there were those who were sown on fertile soil. These represent people who heard 'the word,' accepted it and yielded a crop of thirty, sixty and even a hundred times [as much as was planted]."

21) Then He said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put

under a bushel-sized container, or under the bed, instead of on its stand? 22) For there is nothing that is hidden that should not be exposed. Neither is anything covered up that should not be revealed. 23) If anyone has ears to hear with, he ought to listen to this carefully." 24) And He said to them, "Pay attention to what you are hearing from me. The standard you use in giving [to others] is the standard they will use on you, with even more added. 25) For to the person who [already] has something, [more] will be given, and from the person who has [almost] nothing, even [the little] he has will be taken away from him."

26) And Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is like a farmer who scattered seed on the ground, 27) then went to bed and got up the next day to find that the seed had sprouted and grown, yet he did not know how it happened. 28) The soil yields its crop, first the green sprout, then the ears of grain, and then the kernels in the ears. 29) But when the grain ripens the farmer wields his sickle because harvest time has come."

30) And He continued to speak, "What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? Or, what parable will [best] illustrate it? 31) It is similar to a seed from the mustard tree which, when planted in the ground, 32) even though it is the least [significant] of all seeds on earth, becomes larger than all other plants. It develops huge branches so that the birds of the sky can roost in their shade."

33) And He spoke 'the word' to them [i.e., the crowds] with as many such parables as they were able to receive. 34) And He did not speak to them [i.e., concerning the kingdom] without using a parable, but He explained everything to His own disciples privately.

35) When evening came that day He said to the disciples, "Let us go over to the other side [i.e., the east side of Lake Galilee]." 36) And leaving the crowd, the disciples took Him in their boat just the way He was [i.e., this probably means without His making provision for the trip]. They were accompanied by other boats also. 37) [Then] a violent windstorm arose [on the lake] and huge waves began splashing into the boat until it began to fill with water. 38) Jesus was sleeping on a pillow in the stern of the boat. They awakened Him, shouting, "Teacher, do you not care that we are sinking?" 39) He [immediately] awoke and spoke sternly to the wind and called out to the water, "Be peaceful and still." [Immediately] the wind stopped blowing and a great calm came over the water. 40) And

He said to His disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you not still have [any] faith?" And they were extremely afraid, and said to one another, "Who can this man be that even the wind and water obey him?"

CHAPTER FIVE

1) Then Jesus and His disciples [finally] arrived on the other side of the lake [i.e., the east side] in the district of Geresá [Note: Matt. 8:28 says 'Gadara.' Geresá and Gadara were two towns 12 miles apart in the same region east of Lake Galilee]. 2) When Jesus left the boat, immediately a man with an evil spirit came from the graveyard to meet Him. 3) This man had been living in the graveyard and no one had been able to keep him tied up, not even with a chain. 4) He had often been bound with ropes and chains but had broken the chains off and torn the ropes to pieces. And no one had enough strength to subdue him. 5) And night and day, in the graveyard and in the mountains, he was always shouting out and cutting himself with [sharp] rocks. 6) When he saw Jesus from far away he ran to Him and worshiped Him. 7) And shouting with a loud voice, he said, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, in God's name, do not torture me." 8) For Jesus was saying to [the evil spirit in] him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit." 9) Then He asked [the evil spirit], "What is your name?" And he answered Him, "My name is 'Legion,' [Note: This word means a number consisting of between 5,000 and 6,000], for there are many of us [i.e., evil spirits]." 10) Then the spirits begged Jesus earnestly not to send them away out of the region.

11) On the side of a [nearby] mountain, a large herd of [wild] hogs was grazing. 12) The evil spirits begged Him, saying, "Send us into those [wild] hogs, so we can enter their bodies." 13) And He gave them permission to do it. So, the evil spirits went out of the man's body and entered the bodies of the [wild] hogs. The herd then rushed down the cliff into the lake. There were about two thousand that drowned in the lake. 14) Those who had been feeding them ran and told what all occurred in the town and around the countryside and [so] people came to find out what had happened. 15) And when people came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been dominated by 5,000 to 6,000 evil spirits sitting down with his clothes on and perfectly sane, and they were afraid. 16) Those who saw this told the

people what had happened to the man dominated by the evil spirits and about the [wild] hogs. 17) So, they began begging Jesus to leave that region.

18) As He entered the boat the man who had been dominated by evil spirits begged for permission to be allowed to go with Him. 19) But Jesus would not allow him, saying to the man, "Go home to your friends [and family?] and tell them about the great things the Lord has done for you and how He had pity on you." 20) But the man went away and began telling people throughout Decapolis about all of the great things Jesus had done for him. [Note: "Decapolis" means "ten cities" and was a region located east of the Jordan River].

21) When Jesus had crossed over again in a boat to the other side [i.e., to the northwest shore of the lake, probably in the vicinity of Capernaum], a large crowd gathered around Him along the shore of the lake. 22) About then a man named Jairus, one of the officials of the synagogue, came to Jesus and, upon seeing Him, fell to the ground at His feet. 23) He begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is about to die; [please] come and place your hands on her so she may be healed and live." 24) So, Jesus went along with the man, and was being thronged by a large crowd that followed Him.

25) Then a woman, who had been bleeding for twelve years, came to Him. 26) She had suffered much at the hands of many doctors [i.e., through treatments and medication that only increased her discomfort] and had spent all her money [on medical bills] and yet got worse instead of better. 27) She had heard what Jesus was doing so came from the crowd behind Jesus and touched His robe. 28) For she had told herself, "If only I can touch his clothing, I will be healed." 29) And immediately her flow of blood stopped and she felt healed in her body from the affliction. 30) Just then Jesus perceived in Himself that [healing] power had gone out from Him so turned to the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothing?" 31) And His disciples said to Him, "You see the large crowd thronging you and yet you ask 'Who touched me'?" 32) Then He looked around to see who had done this [i.e., touched Him and received healing]. 33) But the woman became afraid and trembled with fear, for she knew what had happened to her [i.e., the healing], so she came and fell down in front of Jesus and told Him the whole truth. 34) And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be [i.e., remain] healed from your affliction."

35) While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the synagogue official's house and said [to the official], "Your daughter is dead; why are you bothering the Teacher any more?" 36) But Jesus disregarded what the person said and told the official, "Do not be afraid; just believe [i.e., in my power to restore your daughter]." 37) He did not allow anyone to follow Him [i.e., to the official's house] except Peter, James and his brother John. 38) And when they arrived at the synagogue official's house He saw a commotion there, with many people crying and wailing loudly. 39) And when He entered [the house] He said to them, "Why are you making such a commotion and crying? The child is not [really] dead, but only sleeping." 40) They laughed at Him scornfully. But after having all the people wait outside He took the child's father and mother, along with those who came with Him [i.e., Peter, James and John] and went in to where the [sick] child lay. 41) And taking the child by the hand He said to her, "*Talitha cumi*," which means "Little girl," (I tell you), "get up." 42) And immediately the little girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years old. [Upon seeing this] the people were completely amazed. 43) But He strictly ordered them not to tell anyone about this; then He told them to give the girl something to eat.

CHAPTER SIX

1) Then Jesus went out from there and came to His home town [i.e., Nazareth] and His disciples went with Him. 2) And when the Sabbath day came, He began teaching in the synagogue and many who heard Him were amazed, and asked [such questions as], "Where did this man get these things [i.e., knowledge, miracles, etc.]?" and "What kind of wisdom has been given to him?" and "What do these supernatural powers he performs mean?" 3) Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters living here among us?" And they were led to doubt His true identity. 4) Then Jesus said to them, "A prophet does not go without receiving honor, except in his own home town, and among his own relatives, and among his own family members." 5) And He could not perform any supernatural deed there [i.e., because of their lack of faith in Him], except He placed hands on a few sick people [i.e., accompanied by prayer?] and healed them. 6) [But] He

marvelled at the people's lack of faith. So, He travelled and taught throughout the [surrounding] villages.

7) Then Jesus called to Him the twelve apostles and sent them out two by two. He gave them authority over evil spirits 8) and ordered them not to take anything with them during their travels, except a walking stick. They were to take no food, no traveling bag [for personal belongings], and no money in their money belts, 9) but were to wear sandals and take only one coat. 10) And He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that place. 11) And the people from whatever place that does not welcome you or listen to you, when you leave there, shake the dust off from under your shoes as evidence against them." [Note: This was a Jewish custom showing disdain and intended to suggest their unworthiness]. 12) Then they went out and preached that people should repent [i.e., change their hearts and lives]. 13) And they drove out many evil spirits and applied [olive] oil to [the heads of] many sick people and healed them.

14) Now King Herod heard about this [i.e., what Jesus was doing] because His name had become well known. He said, "John the Immerser has risen from the dead and it is his powers that are at work in Jesus." 15) But others said, "He is [the prophet] Elijah." [while] others said, "He is a prophet like one of the prophets [of old]." 16) But when King Herod heard [about Jesus], he said, "John, whom I [had] decapitated, has risen." 17) For it was Herod himself who had sent for John and had him arrested and chained up in prison. He did this to please Herodias, who was [i.e., had been] his brother Philip's wife, but whom Herod had married. 18) For John had said to Herod, "It is unlawful for you to marry your brother's wife." 19) Now [because of this] Herodias had a grudge against John and wanted to kill him, but had not been able to. 20) It was because Herod was afraid of John, knowing he was a righteous and holy man, so he protected him. And Herod became very disturbed whenever he listened to John, yet he heard him gladly.

21) Then an ideal opportunity arose [i.e., for Herodias to do away with John] when Herod gave a dinner on his birthday for his influential friends, military commanders and the prominent officials of Galilee. 22) And when Herodias' daughter [Note: According to Josephus her name was Salome] came in and danced [in front of them, sensually], she pleased Herod and his party guests so much that the king said to the young woman, "Ask me for whatever you want and I will give it to

you." 23) And he vowed to her, "I will give you whatever you ask me for, up to one half [the wealth] of my kingdom." 24) So, she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" And her mother said, "[Ask for] the head of John the Immerser." 25) At once she hurried in to the king and said, "I would like you to give me the head of John the Immerser on a [large] platter right away." 26) And the king became very distressed [over such a gruesome request], but because he had promised her with oaths, and [to keep from looking bad] in front of his party guests, he did not refuse her [request]. 27) And immediately the king sent a soldier who served as his guard and ordered him to bring John's head to him. So, he went and decapitated him in the prison, 28) and brought his head on a [large] platter and gave it to the young woman. She [in turn] gave it to her mother [Herodias]. 29) And when John's disciples heard [what had happened] they took his body and buried it in a grave.

30) Then the apostles got together with Jesus and told Him everything they had done and taught [on their mission]. 31) He said to them, "You men, leave here and go to a deserted place and rest for awhile." For there were so many people coming and going [i.e., to listen to preaching, receive healing, etc.], that they had no opportunity even to eat. 32) So, they [i.e., Jesus and His apostles] left by boat and went to a separate place [where they could be] alone. 33) But the people saw them going and, since many recognized them, these people ran on ahead of them from all the [surrounding] towns. 34) Then Jesus left [His place of seclusion] and, seeing the large crowd, He felt deep compassion for them because they were [as disoriented] as sheep without a shepherd, so He began teaching them.

35) And when the day was nearly over His disciples came to Him and said, "This place is deserted and the day is almost over; 36) send the crowd away so they can go into the surrounding countryside and towns to buy themselves something to eat." 37) But He answered them, "You [men] give them something to eat." And they replied, "Should we go and buy a supply of bread to give them to eat?" [Note: The amount mentioned here indicates that it was two hundred days of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$14,000 in 1994]. 38) And He said to them, "How many loaves [of bread] do you have? Go and see." And when had found out, they said, "Five [barley] loaves [See John 6:9] and two [probably smoked] fish." 39) And He ordered all of them to recline in groups on the green grass. 40) So, they reclined in groups of fifty and one hundred.

41) Then He took the five loaves of bread and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He asked God's blessing on them. Then He broke the loaves and gave them to His disciples to set in front of the people [to eat]. He divided the two fish among them also **42)** and they all ate until they were full. **43)** Then they gathered up twelve baskets full of broken pieces [of bread] and also some fish. **44)** The number eating the loaves of bread was five thousand men. [Note: This was besides women and children. See Matt. 14:21].

45) And about then Jesus compelled His disciples to get into a boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side [i.e., to the west side of Lake Galilee] to Bethsaida [Note: This was apparently a different "Bethsaida" from the one mentioned in Luke 9:10, which was on the east side of Lake Galilee], while He Himself sent the crowd away. **46)** And after He had left them He went into a mountain to pray.

47) When evening came the boat [containing His disciples] was in the middle of the lake while He remained alone on the shore. **48)** When He saw how distressed His disciples were, rowing against an opposing wind, Jesus came to them between three and six o'clock in the morning, walking on the water, and almost walked past them. **49)** But when they saw Him walking on the water they thought it was a spirit, so shouted out, **50)** becoming [very] frightened when they saw Him. But He immediately spoke to them and said, "Take courage, and do not be afraid, it is I." **51)** Then He got up into the boat with them and the wind [immediately] stopped. And His disciples were greatly amazed [at this], **52)** but they did not understand [the miracle] of the loaves because their minds were insensitive [i.e., to the nature and power of Jesus].

53) And when they had [finally] crossed over [i.e., to the west side of Lake Galilee], they arrived in the district of Gennesaret and moored the boat on shore. **54)** As soon as they got out of the boat the people recognized Jesus **55)** and rushed around the whole district to bring sick people on cots to where He was. **56)** And wherever He entered towns, cities or the countryside, they placed sick people at the open shopping markets and begged Him to allow them to touch even the edge of His robe. And all those who touched Him were made well.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1) The Pharisees and some experts in the law of Moses, who had come from Jerusalem, gathered around Jesus. 2) They had observed some of His disciples eating their food with contaminated, that is, [ceremonially] unwashed hands. 3) (For the Pharisees and all the Jews would not eat anything unless they first scrubbed their hands [i.e., up to the wrists] in accordance with the [long-established] tradition of the Jewish elders). 4) And when they returned from the open shopping markets they refused to eat [anything] until they washed themselves [or "it," that is, the food, thoroughly]. There were also many other traditions which they [strictly] observed, like washing cups, pots and copper kettles [thoroughly].) [Note: The most accurate Greek manuscripts do *not* add "and beds" in this verse]. 5) The Pharisees and experts in the law of Moses asked Jesus, "Why do your disciples not live according to the traditions of the Jewish elders, but [instead] eat their food with contaminated [i.e., ceremonially unwashed] hands?" 6) And He answered them, "Isaiah prophesied about you hypocrites very well when he wrote [Isa. 29:13], 'These people honor me with their lips [i.e., by what they say], but their heart is far from [honoring] me. 7) They are worshiping me for nothing because they are teaching principles which are [merely] the requirements of men.' 8) You disregard the commandment of God and [yet] hang onto the traditions of men." 9) And He said to them, "You are good at rejecting the commandment of God so you can keep your traditions. 10) For Moses said, [Ex. 20:12], 'Give honor to your father and mother,' and [Ex. 21:17 says], 'Whoever says bad things about his father or mother should surely be put to death.' 11) But when you people say, 'If someone says to his father or mother, [the money] I could have helped you with is *Corban*; in other words, [it is] given to God,' 12) you are not allowing him to do anything for his father or mother anymore. 13) You are making God's message useless by [enforcing] the tradition you have been following. And you do many things like that."

14) Then He called the crowd to Him again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand [what I am saying]. 15) There is nothing that enters a person's body from the outside that can [spiritually] corrupt him, but it is what proceeds out of a person's life

that [spiritually] corrupts him." {{Verse 16) is absent from most ancient manuscripts}}.

17) And when He had gone into the house away from the crowd His disciples asked Him about this parable. 18) He said to them, "Are you also as lacking in understanding [as the others]? Do you not understand that whatever enters a person's body from the outside cannot [spiritually] corrupt him? 19) It is because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and [eventually] passes out into the toilet." By saying this He made all foods [ceremonially] acceptable. 20) And He said, "Whatever proceeds out of a man's life is what [spiritually] corrupts him. 21) For from within, out of people's hearts, proceed evil thoughts, sexual immorality, stealing, murder, extramarital affairs, 22) greedy desires, wickedness, deceit, unrestrained indecency, envy, slander, arrogance and foolishness. 23) All these evil things proceed from within [man's heart] and [spiritually] corrupt him."

24) And from there Jesus got up and went away into the region of Tyre and Sidon. He entered a house but did not want anyone to know it. However, He could not keep it secret. 25) But just then a woman whose little daughter was dominated by an evil spirit heard about Jesus and came and fell down at His feet. 26) Now the woman was a Greek [i.e., a Gentile], a Syrophoenician by nationality. [Note: This was a region just north of Galilee and consisted of Syria and Phoenicia]. She begged Him to drive out the evil spirit from her daughter. 27) So, He said to her, "Children should be the first ones to eat until they are full, for it is not proper to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." 28) But she answered Him, "Yes Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the crumbs dropped by the children." 29) And He said to her, "Because you have said this, go on your way; the evil spirit has left your daughter." 30) And she went away to her house and found her child lying on her bed with the evil spirit gone from her.

31) Again He left the region of Tyre and traveled [north] through Sidon, [then back south] to Lake Galilee, and through the middle of Decapolis. 32) And they brought to Him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and they begged Him to place His hand on him [for healing]. 33) So, Jesus took him away from the crowd by himself and put His fingers into the man's ears. Then He spit and touched the man's tongue [i.e., with His saliva] 34) and, looking up

to heaven, He sighed and said, "*Ephphatha*," which means, "Be opened." 35) And [immediately] the man's hearing was restored, his speech impediment was removed and he began speaking clearly. 36) Then Jesus ordered the people [who witnessed the miracle] not to tell anyone [about it], but the more He urged them not to, the more widely they publicized it. 37) And they were utterly amazed, saying, "He has done everything just right; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

CHAPTER EIGHT

1) In those days, when a large crowd again assembled [i.e., to listen to Jesus' teaching] and did not have anything to eat, Jesus called His disciples and said to them, 2) "I feel deep pity for this crowd because they have continued listening to me for three days now and have nothing [left] to eat. 3) And if I send them home hungry they will become weak on the way, because some of them have come a long distance." 4) And His disciples replied to Him, "Where will a person get enough bread to feed these people in such a deserted place like this?" 5) And He asked them, "How many loaves of bread do you have?" And they answered, "We have seven loaves." 6) Then He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground; he took the seven loaves, and after giving thanks to God [for them], He divided the food and gave it to His disciples to set in front of them. They [in turn] set it in front of the crowd. 7) They [also] had a few small fish and after asking God's blessing on them, He ordered these also to be set in front of them. 8) And they [all] ate until they were full, then gathered up seven baskets of broken pieces which were left over. 9) The number [who ate] was about four thousand men [besides women and children. See Matt. 15:38]. Then Jesus sent them away. 10) Immediately He boarded a boat with His disciples and crossed [to the west side of the lake], to the region of Dalmanutha. [Note: Matt. 15:39 says "Magadan," which was probably in the same vicinity as Dalmanutha].

11) The Pharisees and Sadducees [i.e., these were strict sects of the Jewish religion], came out and began disputing with Jesus, asking for a [supernatural] sign from Him, [in an attempt] to test Him. 12) Then He sighed deeply in His spirit and said, "Why does this generation of people look for a [supernatural] sign? Truly I tell you,

there will not be any [supernatural] sign given to this generation." 13) Then He left them and boarded a boat again and sailed to the other side [i.e., the east side of Lake Galilee].

14) Now Jesus' disciples had forgotten to take [any] food [with them], and had only one loaf of bread in the boat. 15) Then Jesus ordered them, saying, "Pay attention and watch out for the leavening [effect] of the Pharisees and Herod." [Note: By "Herod" is probably meant the Herodians, who were a party favorable to King Herod and, along with the Pharisees and Sadducees, were out to get Jesus. See Matt. 16:6]. 16) And they began reasoning with one another, saying, "[Why be concerned about yeast since] we do not have [any] bread?" 17) Jesus, being aware of what they were thinking, said, "Why are you reasoning about not having any bread? Have you not yet perceived or understood? Have your hearts become insensitive? 18) Even though you have eyes, do you not see? And even though you have ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? 19) When I divided the five loaves of bread among the five thousand persons, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you gather up?" They said to Him, "Twelve baskets full." 20) He again asked, "And when the seven loaves were divided among the four thousand persons, how many large basketfuls of broken pieces did you gather up?" And they said to Him, "Seven large basketfuls." 21) Then He said to them, "Do you not understand yet?"

22) And when they came to Bethsaida some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged Him to touch him [i.e., for healing]. 23) [So], He took hold of the blind man by his hand and brought him out of the village. When Jesus spit [and put His saliva] on his eyes [See 7:33 for a similar use of His saliva in healing] and placed His hands on him [for healing], He asked him, "Can you see anything?" 24) The man looked up and said, "[Yes], I see people, but they look like trees walking around." 25) Then Jesus again placed His hands on his eyes; the man stared intently, then his sight was [completely] restored and he was able to see everything clearly. 26) Then Jesus sent him home, saying, "Do not even go through the village [on your way]."

27) Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the villages [in the vicinity] of Caesarea Philippi [Note: This was a city about 25 miles north of Lake Galilee]. On their way, He asked His disciples, "Who are people saying that I am?" 28) And they answered Him, "[Some say] you are John the Immerser; others say [the prophet] Elijah, but others say

[you are] one of the prophets." 29) Then He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered Him, "You are the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one]." 30) Then He ordered them not to tell anyone about His identity.

31) Jesus then began teaching them that the Son of man must suffer very much, be rejected by the [Jewish] elders, leading priests, and experts in the law of Moses and be killed, but rise again [from the dead] after three days. 32) And He spoke about this freely. But Peter took Jesus aside and began rebuking Him [i.e., for saying such things]. 33) But He turned around, and looking at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying to him, "Get away from me, Satan; for you are not thinking about God's things but about men's."

34) And He called the crowd to Him, along with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wants to be my follower, he should deny himself [i.e., of always having his own way] and accept his cross [i.e., his responsibilities, with all their difficulties] and then he can become my follower. 35) For whoever would [try to] save his life [i.e., by neglecting spiritual things] will lose it [i.e., miss out on the blessings of God]. But whoever [is willing] to lose his life [i.e., in commitment to God's service] for my sake and [the work of] the Gospel's sake, will save it [i.e., obtain both temporal and spiritual blessings]. 36) For what would it benefit a person to gain the whole world [i.e., of material things] and give up his life [i.e., of spiritual blessings]? 37) Or what should a person give in exchange for his life? 38) For whoever will be ashamed of me and of my words in this [spiritually] unfaithful and sinful generation, the Son of man will also be ashamed of him when He returns in the splendor of His Father, accompanied by the holy angels."

CHAPTER NINE

1) And Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, there are some people standing here who will surely not experience death until they see that God's kingdom has come in [a demonstration of] power."

2) And after six days had passed, Jesus took Peter, James and John aside alone and went up to a high mountain [i.e., probably Mt. Tabor, which was nearby]. [There] His whole appearance was [miraculously] changed in front of them. 3) His clothing became dazzling and extremely white; whiter than anyone in the world could

[possibly] launder them. 4) Then Elijah, along with Moses, appeared to them and they were talking with Jesus. 5) And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi [i.e., Teacher], it is good for us to be here. Let us build three small shelters, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." [See note at Matt. 17:4] 6) For he did not know what to say, because they [all] became very afraid. 7) [Just then] a cloud engulfed them and a voice spoke out of the cloud saying, "This is my dearly loved Son, listen to Him." 8) And suddenly they looked all around them, but the only one they saw with them was Jesus.

9) And as they were coming down from the mountain Jesus ordered His disciples not to tell anyone what they had seen until [after] the Son of man was raised again from the dead. 10) So, they kept what He told them to themselves, discussing [only] among themselves what "rising again from the dead" meant. 11) Then His disciples asked Him, "Why is it, [since you are obviously the Messiah], that the experts in the law of Moses say that Elijah must come first?" 12) Jesus answered them, "Elijah truly will come first and restore all things [i.e., to their proper perspective concerning the Messiah]. And it is [also] written [in the Scriptures] about the Son of man, that He would suffer very much and be rejected. 13) But I tell you, Elijah has [already] come, and they did to him what they wanted to, just like it was written about him [in the Scriptures]."

14) And when Peter, James and John [See verse 2] returned to [the rest of] the disciples, they saw a large crowd gathered around them, and the experts in the law of Moses disputing with them. 15) And immediately, upon seeing Jesus, the entire crowd ran to greet Him in great amazement [i.e., possibly over His sudden appearance]. 16) And He asked the crowd, "What are you arguing about with my disciples?"

17) And someone in the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought to you my son, who is dominated by a spirit which causes him to be a mute. 18) Wherever it seizes him, it throws him down and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I spoke to your disciples, asking them to drive it out, but they were not able to." 19) Jesus said to them, "You generation of faithless people! How long must I be with you [i.e., before you understand]? How long do I have to be patient with you? Bring the sick boy to me." 20) Then they [i.e., some people from the crowd] brought the sick boy to Jesus, and when the spirit saw Him, it immediately caused the boy to have convulsions

and to fall to the ground and roll around, foaming at the mouth. 21) Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he answered, "Since he was a small child. 22) And frequently the evil spirit has tried to kill him, throwing him into a fire or into the water. But if you can do anything [for him], have pity on us and help us." 23) And Jesus said to him, "'If you can.' [Note: By repeating the man's words Jesus seems to be saying, "You mean, if YOU can believe"]. Everything is possible to the person who believes [it can happen]." 24) Immediately the father of the boy cried out, "I do believe; help me to have more faith." 25) When Jesus saw a crowd running together [toward Him], He spoke sternly to the evil spirit [in the boy], saying to it, "You deaf-mute spirit, I order you to come out of this boy and to never return to him again." 26) The spirit shrieked and caused violent convulsions [in the boy], then came out of him. The boy appeared to be dead, so that most of the people were saying, "He is dead." 27) But Jesus grasped his hand and lifted him up, and he arose [fully healed].

28) And when Jesus had come into a house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not drive out the evil spirit [from that boy]?" 29) He answered them, "This kind [of spirit] cannot be driven out except by praying."

30) So, they left there and traveled through Galilee, but Jesus did not want anyone to know about it. 31) For He taught His disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be handed over to [evil] men and they will kill Him, and three days after He dies He will rise up again." 32) But His disciples did not understand what He meant and were afraid to ask Him.

33) Then Jesus and His disciples came to Capernaum [Note: This city on the northwest shore of Lake Galilee had become sort of a headquarters for Jesus when He was in this region]. When He [and His disciples] entered a house He asked them, "What were you discussing on the way here?" 34) But they kept quiet for they had been arguing with one another over which one of them was the greatest. 35) So, He sat down and called the twelve apostles and said to them, "If anyone [of you] should [try to] be first [in importance] he will [end up] being last, and become the servant of all [the others]. 36) And He took a little child and placed it in front of them, and lifting the child up into His arms, He said to them, 37) "Whoever welcomes one such little child [as this] for my sake, welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me, does not welcome

me [only], but [also] the One who sent me."

38) [Then] John [the apostle] said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out evil spirits by using your name, so we told him to stop doing it, because he was not following [You] with us." 39) But Jesus said, "Do not try to stop him, for there is not anyone who performs a supernatural deed using my name who will be able to quickly say something bad about me. 40) For the person who is not against us is for us. 41) Truly I tell you, whoever will give you [even] a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his [temporal or eternal] reward. 42) And whoever causes one of these little ones [i.e., humble followers of the Lord. See Matt. 18:6] who believes in me to be led astray [from God], he would have been better off to have had a huge millstone tied around his neck and thrown into the ocean [Note: This was a heavy, circular stone rolled over grain to crush it, and moved by an animal walking in a circle]. 43) And if your hand becomes the occasion for falling away [from God], cut it off; it would be better for you to enter [never ending] life disabled, rather than keeping both hands and going to hell, into the fire that cannot be put out [i.e., all because it caused you to fall away from God]. {{ Verse 44) is absent from many manuscripts }}. 45) And if your foot becomes the occasion for falling away [from God], cut it off; it would be better for you to enter [never ending] life crippled, rather than keeping both feet and being thrown into hell. {{Verse 46) is absent from many manuscripts }}. 47) And if your eye becomes the occasion for falling away [from God] gouge it out; it would be better for you to enter the kingdom of God with [only] one eye, rather than keeping both eyes and being thrown into hell [i.e., all because one of them caused you to fall away from God]. 48) For in hell the worm of those who are there will never die [i.e., their gnawing punishment will never cease] and the fire [there] will never go out. 49) For everyone will be salted with fire. [Note: This meant either the suffering "salt" of fiery trials (the sacrifices of verses 43-47) or the punishing "salt" of being thrown into a fiery hell (verse 45-48)].

50) "Salt is good, but if it loses its salty flavor, what will you use to restore it? [i.e., it is difficult to restore the "salt" of sacrificial commitment to God once it is lost]. You should have salt in yourselves [i.e., develop the qualities of preserving, purifying commitment to God], and live peacefully with one another [i.e., instead of in rivalry. See 9:33-34].

CHAPTER TEN

1) And Jesus left there and went to the region of Judea and east of the Jordan River. Again crowds gathered around Him and He continued teaching them, as was His custom.

2) Some Pharisees [i.e., a strict sect of the Jewish religion] came to Him [and attempted] to test Him by asking, "Is it permissible by the law of Moses for a man to divorce his wife?" 3) And He answered them, "What did Moses command you [to do]?" 4) They replied, "Moses allowed us to provide a legal divorce decree and [then] to divorce her." 5) But Jesus said to them, "He wrote you this commandment [only] because of the rebellious spirit of you [Jews]. 6) But from the beginning of creation God made mankind male and female. 7) For this reason [i.e., since he made one woman for one man] a man will leave [the home of] his father and mother and will cling to his wife 8) and the two of them will [then] become one flesh [i.e., united in such a close relationship as to constitute one body], so that [upon becoming husband and wife] they no longer function as two persons but as one body. 9) Therefore, those whom God so joins together [in the marriage bond], no person must ever separate."

10) And when they were in the house, His disciples asked Him about this matter again. 11) And He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another [woman] commits sexual unfaithfulness [toward her]. 12) And if she herself divorces her husband and marries another [man], she commits sexual unfaithfulness [toward him]."

13) Then some [parents] were bringing [their] little children to Jesus so He could touch them [i.e., to bestow a blessing on them], but His disciples spoke harshly to these parents [for doing this]. 14) But when Jesus saw it, He was moved with [righteous] indignation, and said to them, "Allow these little children to come to me and stop trying to prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such [humble ones. See Matt. 18:4]. 15) Truly I tell you, whoever does not welcome the kingdom of God as a little child does, that person will by no means enter it." 16) Then He lifted up the children into His arms, and placing His hands on them, He asked God's blessing on them.

17) As Jesus was leaving to go on His way, a man ran to Him

and kneeled down in front of Him and asked, "Good Teacher, what should I do in order to possess never ending life?" 18) Jesus answered him, "Why are you calling me good? Nobody is good except One, that is, God. 19) You know the commandments: Do not murder. Do not be sexually unfaithful to your mate. Do not steal. Do not give false testimony. Do not cheat. Show honor to your father and mother." 20) And he replied, "Teacher, I have [already] been observing all these commandments since I was a young lad." 21) And Jesus looked at him, and filled with love, said to him, "There is one thing you [still] lack. Go and sell your possessions and give [the money] to poor people; become my follower, then you will have treasure in heaven." 22) But the man had a sad look on his face when he heard these words, and went away sorrowful, for he had many possessions.

23) Then Jesus looked around Him and said to His disciples, "How difficult it is for rich people to enter the kingdom of God!" 24) And His disciples were amazed at what He said. But Jesus spoke to them again and said, "How difficult it is [for anyone] to enter the kingdom of God! 25) It is [actually] easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." 26) And they were utterly amazed and said to Him, "Then who can [possibly] be saved?" 27) Jesus looked at them and said, "This would be impossible with men, but not with God, for everything is possible with God." 28) Peter began saying to Him, "Look, we have left everything [i.e., homes, jobs, family, etc.] to follow you." 29) Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, no one who has left his house, or brothers, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children or property for my sake and the Gospel's sake [i.e., to become a servant of the Lord], 30) but what he will receive [back] a hundred times as much now in this life --- houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and children and property --- [yet] with persecutions. And in the coming age [he will receive] never ending life. 31) But many that [appear to] be first [i.e., in importance and blessings] will [end up] being last. And [those appearing to] be last will [end up] being first."

32) Now Jesus and His disciples were [traveling] along the road, going up to Jerusalem, with Jesus moving on ahead of the others. The disciples were amazed and they followed [behind Him] fearfully. [Note: From the context, it appears their amazement was due to His eagerness to enter Jerusalem in spite of the imminent danger they felt awaited Him there]. He took the

twelve apostles aside and began telling them about the things that were going to happen to Him. **33)** He said, "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of man will be turned over to the leading priests and experts in the law of Moses. They will condemn Him to death and turn Him over to the [unconverted] Gentiles. **34)** They will mock Him, and spit on Him, and whip Him and [finally] kill Him, but after three days He will rise again [from the dead]."

35) Now James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came over to Jesus and said to Him, "We would like you to do for us whatever we ask you." **36)** And He said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" **37)** They answered Him, "Appoint one of us to sit at your right side and the other at your left side [when you come] in splendor." **38)** But Jesus said to them, "You [really] do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup [i.e., of suffering] that I will drink? Or [are you able] to be immersed with the immersion that I am [to be] immersed with?" [i.e., to be overwhelmed with agony]. **39)** And they said to Him, "[Yes], we are able to." And Jesus said to them, "The cup [of suffering] that I [will] drink, you [also] will drink. And the immersion [with agony] with which I am [to be] immersed, you [also] will be immersed. **40)** But it is not my prerogative to appoint who sits at my right side and at my left, but [those places] are for people to whom it has been assigned [by the Father]." **41)** When the ten other apostles heard this, they became very upset with James and John. **42)** Jesus called them [i.e., probably all twelve apostles] to Him and said, "You are aware that those who are regarded as rulers among the [unconverted] Gentiles lord it over their own people, and their important men domineer over them [as well]. **43)** But it is not [to be] this way among you, for whoever would like to become important among you will be your servant. **44)** And whoever would like to be first [in prominence] among you, will be your slave. **45)** For the Son of man did not come to be served [by others] but to be the servant [of others], and to sacrifice His life as a ransom price for many people [i.e., to purchase them back from Satan]."

46) Then they [i.e., Jesus and the twelve apostles] came to Jericho [Note: This was a town about 18 miles northeast of Jerusalem]. As He left there with His disciples and a large crowd, they met a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sitting along side the road. **47)** When he heard that it was Jesus from Nazareth [passing by], he began shouting, "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me." **48)** Many

people spoke harshly to the blind man, telling him to be quiet. But he shouted all the more [loudly], "Son of David, have pity on me." 49) So, Jesus stopped and said, "Call that man [to me]." Then the crowd called the blind man, saying to him, "Cheer up, Jesus is calling you." 50) So, he threw off his robe, jumped up, and [immediately] went to Jesus. 51) Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man answered, "*Rabboni* [i.e., Teacher], I want to have my sight restored." 52) And Jesus said to him, "Go on your way, your faith [in me] has made you well." And immediately his sight was restored, and he began following Jesus along the road.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) And when they [all] approached Jerusalem, and came close to Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives [Note: These small villages were about two miles east of Jerusalem], He sent two of His disciples on ahead, 2) saying to them, "Go into the village just ahead of you and, upon entering it, you will find tied up [there] a colt that no one has ever ridden; untie it and bring it here. 3) And if anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" you should say, "The Lord needs it," and immediately he will send it back here. 4) So, they went away and found a [donkey's] colt tied up at the gate, outside in the street, and untied it. 5) Some bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" 6) But they answered him exactly what Jesus had told them to say, so the people let them go. 7) Then they brought the colt to Jesus and spread their clothing on it and He mounted it. 8) Many people spread their clothing on the roadway, while others spread leafy branches, which they had cut from the fields. 9) And the people who walked ahead of Him and followed behind shouted, "*Hosanna* [Note: The Syriac word '*Hosanna*' originally meant 'save now' but came to be used as an expression of welcome, praise, blessing or acclamation], may He who comes in the name [i.e., by the authority] of the Lord, be blessed. 10) May the coming kingdom of our forefather David be blessed. *Hosanna* in the highest [i.e., may this blessing reach to the highest heaven]."

11) Then Jesus entered the Temple in Jerusalem, and after looking around at everything [there], He left for Bethany with the twelve apostles, since it was evening by then. [Note: Jesus stayed overnight at Bethany during the week prior to His crucifixion. See verse 19].

12) On the next day, when they were going from Bethany [to

Jerusalem], Jesus became hungry. 13) Upon seeing in the distance a leafy fig tree, He approached it in hope of finding something on it [to eat]. But when He got there He found nothing but leaves on it, for it was not the season for figs [yet]. 14) Therefore, He said to the tree, "From now on no one will ever eat fruit from you." Now His disciples heard Him say this.

15) Then they entered Jerusalem and Jesus went into the Temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold [animals for sacrifice]. He upset the tables of the cashiers [i.e., those who exchanged foreign coins] and the benches of those who sold pigeons [for sacrifices]. 16) And He would not [even] allow anyone to carry a container [of goods] through the Temple [area]. 17) Then He taught them, saying, "Is it not written [Isa. 56:7], 'My house [i.e., the Temple] will be called a house of prayer for people of all nations'? But [Jer. 7:11 says], 'You have made it a hideout for thieves.'" 18) The leading priests and experts in the law of Moses heard this and began looking for some way to kill Jesus, because they were afraid of Him, since the whole crowd was amazed at His teaching.

19) And each evening He left the city [of Jerusalem, and went to Bethany for the night].

20) The next morning, [as they returned to the city], they passed by the fig tree and saw that it had withered, clear down to its roots. 21) Then Peter remembered [what Jesus had done to the fig tree on a recent occasion], and said to Him, "Rabbi [i.e., Teacher], look, the fig tree you cursed [the other day] has withered up." 22) Jesus replied to him, "You should have faith in God. 23) Truly I tell you, whoever will say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the ocean' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he said will happen, he will have his request granted. 24) Therefore I tell you, whatever things you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received them, and you will have every one of them. 25) And whenever you stand praying, forgive whatever [grievance] you might have against anyone, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you of your sins." { { Verse 26) is absent from many ancient manuscripts } }.

27) Jesus and His disciples again came to Jerusalem. As He was walking in the Temple [area] the leading priests, experts in the law of Moses and [Jewish] elders came to Him 28) and said, "By what authority are you doing these things [i.e., miracles and teaching]? Or who gave you the authority to do these things?" 29)

Jesus answered them, "Let me ask you a question. And if you answer it, then I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 30) Was the immersion of John [authorized] from heaven or from men? Give me an answer." 31) So, they discussed this among themselves, saying, "If we say 'from heaven' He will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe his message?' 32) But, should we say 'from men' [instead]?" Now they feared the people, for all of them considered John to be a true prophet. 33) So, they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know [where John got his authority to immerse]." Jesus replied to them, "[Then] neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things [i.e., miracles and teaching]."

CHAPTER TWELVE

1) Jesus began speaking to them [i.e., to the leading priests and experts in the law of Moses (See 11:18) or, to the people (See Luke 20:9)] by using parables. He said, "A man planted a vineyard and built a fence around it. He dug a place for constructing a grape squeezing device, built a [lookout] tower [near it], then leased it out to tenant farmers and went to another country. 2) And when the [grape harvest] season came, the owner of the farm sent a slave to the tenant farmers asking them to deliver the grape crop [to him]. 3) But they took the slave and beat him and sent him away empty handed. 4) Again the owner of the farm sent another slave, whom they wounded in the head and shamefully abused. 5) He sent [still] another slave, whom they killed. He continued sending many more slaves; they beat some and killed others. 6) The owner had one more person [left to send], his dearly loved son. [So] he sent him to them last of all, reasoning to himself, '[Surely] they will treat my son with respect.' 7) But the tenant farmers said to one another, 'This is the heir [to the vineyard]. Come on, let us kill him and then the inheritance will be ours.' 8) So they took him and killed him and threw his body out of the vineyard. 9) What do you think the owner of the vineyard will do [when he gets back]?" Jesus asked. [Then He continued], "He will come and kill those tenant farmers and give the vineyard to other people. 10) Have you never read this Scripture [Psa. 118:22-23], 'The building block rejected by the builders is the same [one] that was made the principal stone by which the entire building was aligned.

11) This was planned by the Lord and is a marvelous thing to us'?"

12) And they [i.e., the leading priests and experts in the Law of Moses] attempted to arrest Jesus, but [hesitated because] they feared what the crowd might do, for they understood that He was speaking the parable against them. So, they left Him and went away.

13) Then the Pharisees sent certain ones of their number [See Matt. 22:15-16] along with the Herodians [Note: This refers to members of a political party favoring King Herod] to attempt to trap Him by what He said.

14) And when they arrived, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and [that you] do not care for [i.e., do not fear or give in to] anyone. For you do not allow [the position of] any person to influence you, but teach the truth about God's way. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? 15) Should we pay it, or should we not pay it?" But Jesus was aware of their hypocrisy and said to them, "Bring me the coin so I can see it." [Note: The amount of this coin was equivalent to one day of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$60-\$84 in 1994]. 16) So, they brought it to Him and He said to them, "Whose image and inscription [are on this coin]?" And they answered Him, "Caesar's." 17) Then Jesus replied to them, "Pay to Caesar whatever belongs to Caesar and pay to God whatever belongs to God." And they greatly marvelled at Him.

18) Then some Sadducees, [the ones] who say there is no resurrection [of the dead], came and asked Him, 19) "Teacher, Moses wrote to us [Deut. 25:5] that if a man's brother dies, leaving his widow behind without having had any children, his brother should marry his widow and father children by her. These children would then be considered his [dead] brother's. 20) [Now] there were [these] seven brothers; the first one got married, but when he died he left no children behind. 21) So, the second one married his widow, and at his death he too left no children behind. Then the third one did the same thing. 22) All seven left no children [behind when they died]. Finally, the woman also passed away. 23) [Now] whose wife will she be in the resurrected state, for all seven [brothers] were married to her?" 24) Jesus said to them, "Is not this the reason that you are [so] mistaken, that you do not know [what] the Scriptures [teach] or [how much] power God has? 25) For when people rise from the dead, men do not get married, and women are not given away in marriage, but [all] are like angels in heaven. 26) But concerning those who are raised from the dead, have you never read in the book of Moses, in the incident about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying [Ex. 3:6],

'I am Abraham's God, and Isaac's God, and Jacob's God?' 27) [So], He is not God to those who are dead, but [He is] God to those who are alive. You are seriously mistaken."

28) Then one of the experts in the law of Moses [Note: Matt. 22:34 identifies him as being a Pharisee also], came and heard Jesus and the Sadducees discussing together [i.e., the subject of the resurrection], and knowing that Jesus had refuted the Sadducees successfully, asked Him, "Which commandment is foremost, above all the others?" 29) And Jesus answered, "The foremost one is this [Deut. 6:4-5], 'Hear this, you Israelites, the Lord our God is the only Lord, 30) and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31) The second one is this, 'You must love your neighbor the same way that you love yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these [i.e., love for God and man]." 32) The expert in the law of Moses said to Jesus, "Truly, Teacher, you are right in saying that God is [the only] one and that there is no other God but Him. 33) And that to love Him with all one's heart, with all one's understanding, and with all one's strength, and to love one's neighbor the same way he loves himself, are far more [important] than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices [in the world]." 34) When Jesus saw that this man answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not [very] far from the kingdom of God." And after that, no one dared to ask Him any more questions.

35) As Jesus was teaching in the Temple, He responded [to some Pharisees. See Matt. 22:41] by asking, "How is it that the experts in the law of Moses can say that the Christ is the son of David? 36) [It was] David himself [who] said by [inspiration of] the Holy Spirit [Psa. 110:1], 'The Lord [i.e., God] said to my [i.e., David's] Lord [i.e., Jesus], sit at my right side until I make your enemies the footrest [i.e., in subjection] under your feet.' 37) David himself called Him [i.e., Jesus] Lord, so how could He be his son?" And the large crowd listened to Him with pleasure.

38) In His teaching Jesus said, "Look out for the experts in the law of Moses, who like to walk around in long [flowing] robes and to receive special greetings at the open shopping markets 39) and to occupy the principal seats in the synagogues and the head places at dinner tables. 40) They consume widow's houses [i.e., by foreclosing on them] and [then] cover it up by offering lengthy prayers. These people will receive a more severe judgment."

41) Then Jesus sat down over near the [Temple] treasury and watched how the crowd was throwing money into the treasury [Note: This "treasury" was a large open-mouthed container used for receiving offerings for meeting expenses of Temple upkeep]. Many rich people were throwing in lots of money. **42)** A poor widow came and threw in two small copper coins [Note: These two coins each amounted to about ten minutes' worth of a farm laborer's pay, or about one dollar in 1994]. The total she gave was equivalent to a larger coin [i.e., worth twice as much]. **43)** Jesus called His disciples to Him and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has thrown in more than all the rest who are throwing [money] into the treasury. **44)** For all of them threw in from their abundance, but being very poor, she threw in everything she had, even all she had to live on."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) As Jesus left the Temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, look at the kind of stones these buildings are made of!" **2)** And Jesus responded to him, "Do you see these huge buildings? There will not be one stone left on another here that will not be thrown down."

3) As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, over near the Temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked Him privately, **4)** "Tell us, when will these things [you just spoke of] happen? And what will be the sign [that indicates] when all these things are about to be fulfilled?"

5) Then Jesus began saying to them, "Pay attention so that no one leads you astray [i.e., from the truth]. **6)** [For] many [false teachers] will come, claiming to be me, and saying, 'I am [the Christ] and they will lead many people astray. **7)** And when you hear of wars [going on] and rumors of [other] wars [pending], do not worry, for such things must necessarily happen. But the end has not yet come. [Note: By "end" here Jesus probably alludes to the downfall of Jerusalem in AD 70, with its attending destruction of the Temple buildings]. **8)** For nations will wage war against one another, and kingdoms will attack one another. And earthquakes will happen at various places [in the world], and there will be famines. These things are [only] the beginning of terrible times.

9) "But pay attention to yourselves, for people will turn you over to [Jewish] councils [i.e., for judgment] and you will be beaten

in synagogues. You will stand trial before governors and kings for being loyal to me. [This will afford you an opportunity] for witnessing to them. 10) And the good news must first be preached to people of all nations. 11) And when they lead you into court, and hand you over [to be judged], do not worry ahead of time about what you will say, but [just] say whatever you are told [i.e., by God] when the time comes. 12) And [at that time] a person will turn his brother over to be killed, and the father will do the same to his child. And children will rebel against their parents and will turn them over to be killed. 13) You will be hated by all people because you belong to me, but the person who holds out [i.e., remains faithful to God] until the end [i.e., the end of this time of severe persecution] will be saved [from destruction].

14) "But when you see that disgusting thing that causes total destruction [i.e., the Roman armies. See Luke 21:20] standing where it ought not to be [i.e., surrounding the besieged city of Jerusalem], (let the reader understand [what is meant by this]), then those of you in Judea are to run away into the [nearby] mountains. 15) Also the person who is on a housetop [Note: This was a flat area where people retired for rest, prayer, etc., with its stairway on the outside] should not go down into his house to take anything out [when he flees]. 16) The person who is in a field [i.e., doing farm work] should not return [to his house] to get his coat [even]. 17) [It will be] too bad for those who are pregnant and those who are nursing babies in those days. 18) And pray that [your flight] will not be in the winter. 19) There will be great trouble during those days, such as had never been from the beginning of God's creation until the present, or even will be [in the days to come]. 20) And if the Lord had not kept those days as short as they were, no one would have been saved [i.e., from the devastating destruction]. But for the sake of the elect [i.e., God's people], whom He chose, He kept those days short. 21) And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is Christ,' or 'Look, there He is,' do not believe him. 22) For false Christs and false prophets will appear and they will perform [miraculous] signs and [supernatural] wonders in order to lead astray [even] the elect, if possible. 23) But pay attention, for I have told you [all this] ahead of time.

24) "But after those days of terrible trouble [i.e., the next major event on God's calendar will be], the sun will become dark, and [therefore] the moon will not [be able to] shed its [reflected] light, 25)

and the stars will be falling from the sky and the forces of the heavens will be shaken. [Note: From the description of these same events in Luke 21:25-26, it is possible that this is figurative language for great calamities happening on earth]. 26) And then they will see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and splendor. 27) And He will send out His angels and gather His elect [i.e., God's people] from all directions, from the farthest part of the earth to the farthest part of the sky [i.e., from throughout the whole world].

28) "Now learn this parable from the fig tree. When its tender sprouts appear and its leaves begin to develop, you know that summer is near. 29) In the same way also, when you see these things happening, you [should] know that He [i.e., Jesus] is as near as your [front] door. 30) Truly I tell you, the people of this generation will not [all] die off before all these things [i.e., mentioned above] happen. 31) Although the sky and the earth will pass away [See II Pet. 3:10], my words will not pass away [i.e., they will certainly come true]. 32) But no one knows when that day or that hour will come; not even the angels in heaven or the Son of God know, but only the Father does.

33) "You should pay attention; be alert and pray, for you do not know when the time will come [i.e., for the Lord to return]. 34) It is like a man who left his house on a trip to another country. [Before leaving] he put his servants in charge of his affairs, giving each one a [particular] job to do, then he ordered the gatekeeper to stay alert [i.e., while he was gone]. 35) So, be alert, because you do not know when the owner of the house will return, whether [some] evening, at midnight, at dawn, or at [mid-] morning. 36) [Be alert], for he might come unexpectedly and find you asleep. 37) And what I am telling you, I am telling everyone. Be alert!"

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1) Now the Passover Festival and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were held two days later. [Note: This was the annual Jewish Festival week commemorating Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage under Moses' leadership. The unleavened bread was specially baked bread containing no yeast, which was eaten for seven days as part of the celebration]. And the leading priests and experts in the law of Moses were looking for a way to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. 2) But they reasoned, "We will not [take him] during the Festival, because it might start a riot among the people."

3) And while Jesus was in Bethany [Note: This was a small village fewer than two miles east of Jerusalem], sitting at the dinner table in the house of Simon, the man with an infectious skin disease [Note: This man had probably been healed by now], a woman with an alabaster [i.e., stone] jar of very expensive perfume came to Him, broke the jar and poured the perfume on His head. 4) But some [of the disciples. See Matt. 26:8] were upset among themselves, saying, "What is the reason for wasting this perfume? 5) It might have been sold for a large sum of money and the money given to poor people. [Note: The amount indicated here was equivalent to 300 days of a farm laborer's pay, or over \$20,000 in 1994]. And they complained about her [doing this]. 6) But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why are you bothering this woman? For she has done a kind deed to me. 7) You will always have poor people with you, and you can do something good for them whenever you want to, but you will not always have me with you. 8) She has done what she could. She has applied this aromatic oil to my body in anticipation of my burial. 9) For truly I tell you, wherever the Gospel message will be preached throughout the whole world, what this woman has done [for me] will [also] be told about as a memorial of her [kindness to me]."

10) Now Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve apostles, left and went to the leading priests in order to make arrangements for turning Jesus over to them. 11) And when they [i.e., the leading priests] realized this, they were very pleased and promised to give him money. So, Judas began looking for a convenient way to turn Jesus over to these Jewish leaders.

12) Now on the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread [i.e., the beginning of the Passover Festival week], when they sacrificed the Passover [lamb], Jesus' disciples said to Him, "Where do you want us to go to make preparations for you to eat the Passover meal?" 13) So, He sent two of His disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city [of Jerusalem] and there a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you; follow him. 14) And wherever he enters a house [follow him inside and] say to the owner, 'The Teacher says, where is my guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' 15) And the owner himself will show you a large upstairs room all furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there [i.e., to observe the Passover meal]." 16) So, the disciples left and entered the city [of Jerusalem]. They found everything just as Jesus told them [it would be], and they made preparations for the Passover meal.

17) When evening came, Jesus arrived [at the upstairs room] with the twelve apostles. 18) As they reclined at the table to eat, [Note: See Matt. 23:6] Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will turn me over [i.e., to the Jewish leaders]; [it is the one] who is eating with me." 19) And they [all] began to be grieved and said to Him, one by one, "Am I the one?" 20) And He answered them, "It is one of you twelve, [the one] who is dipping [his bread] with me in the sauce bowl. 21) For the Son of man is going [to die], but it is too bad for that person who will turn me over to the Jewish leaders! It would be better for that man if he had not been born."

22) And as they were eating He took a [small] loaf of bread, and when He had asked God's blessing on it, He broke it and gave [pieces] to His disciples and said, "Take this, it is [i.e., represents] my [physical] body." 23) Then He took a cup [i.e., probably wine made from fresh or possibly preserved grape juice], and when He had given thanks to God, He passed it to them and they all drank from it. 24) And He said to them, "This is [i.e., represents] my blood of the Agreement [i.e., between God and mankind] which is [to be] poured out for many people. 25) Truly I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine [i.e., grape juice] any more until that day when I will drink it again [i.e., figuratively] in the kingdom of God."

26) And after they had sung a hymn, they went up to the Mount of Olives.

27) Then Jesus said to His disciples, "All of you will have doubts about me, for it is written [Zech. 13:7], 'I will strike down the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered everywhere.' 28) However, after I am raised up, I will go on ahead of you to Galilee." 29) But Peter said to Him, "Although everyone else will have doubts [about you], I never will." 30) And Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, today, in fact this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny [knowing] me three times." 31) But Peter kept insisting emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, still I will not deny [knowing] you." And all the rest of the disciples spoke the same way.

32) Jesus and His disciples came to a place called Gethsemane [Note: This was an olive orchard on a hillside just east of Jerusalem]. He said to His disciples, "You sit here while I [go away and] pray." 33) And He took Peter, James and John with Him and began to be troubled and deeply distressed. 34) He said to them, "My soul is extremely grieved, even to the point where I could die. Stay here and

be alert [i.e., in prayer]." 35) And He went on ahead a short distance and fell to the ground and prayed for that hour [i.e., that time of terrible grief] to pass away from Him, if it were at all possible. 36) So, He said, "*Abba*," [which means] "Father, everything is possible with you. Take this cup [i.e., of suffering] away from me; however, let it not be what I want but what you want for me."

37) And when He came back and found His disciples sleeping He said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not stay alert [in prayer] for one hour? 38) Be alert and pray, so that you do not give in to temptation. The spirit of a person is truly willing [i.e., to do a certain thing], but his physical nature is [often] too weak [to carry it out]."

39) And He went away again and prayed, saying the same words. 40) Then He came back again and found His disciples still asleep, because they had not been able to keep their eyes open at all.

41) And He came back a third time and said to them, "Go ahead and sleep now and get your rest. That is enough; the time has come. See, the Son of man is about to be turned over into the hands of sinners. 42) Get up, let us be going. Look, the one who will turn me over [i.e., to the Jewish leaders] is nearby."

43) And immediately, as Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve apostles came with a crowd who were carrying swords and clubs. [They had come] from the leading priests, the experts in the law of Moses and the [Jewish] elders. 44) Now the one who turned Him over to the Jewish leaders [i.e., Judas] had given them a signal, saying, "Whoever I give a kiss [of greeting] to, he is the one; arrest him and lead him away under guard." 45) And when Judas came, immediately he went to Jesus and said, "Rabbi," and then kissed Him [enthusiastically]. 46) Then the soldiers and officers arrested Him and began taking Him away. 47) But a certain disciple that was standing nearby [i.e., Peter. See John 18:10] drew his sword and struck the head priest's servant [i.e., Malchus. See John 18:10], shearing off his ear. 48) Then Jesus said to them, "Have you come out to arrest me with swords and clubs like you would a thief? 49) I was with you every day, teaching in the Temple, and you did not [come to] take me. But this has happened so that the Scriptures would be fulfilled." 50) And all of His disciples left Him and ran away.

51) And a certain young man [Note: Some think this is a reference to Mark himself], who had a linen outer garment thrown over his scantily

clad body, was following Jesus until they [i.e., the soldiers and officers] took hold of him [Note: The wording here does not indicate total nakedness, but rather the wearing of underclothing only]. **52)** Then he ran away in his underclothing, leaving his linen outer garment behind.

53) Then they led Jesus away to the head priest, and all the leading priests, [Jewish] elders and experts in the law of Moses came together with Him. **54)** But Peter had followed Him from a distance, right into the courtyard of the head priest. He was sitting there with the [Jewish] officers, warming himself by the light of the fire.

55) Now the leading priests and the entire Council [called the "Sanhedrin"] were looking for [false] witnesses to testify against Jesus in order to put Him to death, but did not find any. **56)** For many persons gave false testimony against Him, but their stories did not harmonize. **57)** Then two people [See Matt. 26:60] stood up and gave false testimony against Him, saying, **58)** "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this Temple, which was constructed by hand, and in three days I will build another one, not made by hand.'" **59)** And not even [in this attempt did] their testimony harmonize.

60) The head priest stood up in front of them and asked Jesus, "Do you not have anything to answer? What about this charge being made against you by these people?" **61)** But Jesus kept quiet and did not give them any answer.

Again the head priest asked Him, "Are you the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one]?" **62)** And Jesus answered, "Yes, I am; and you will see the Son of man sitting at the right side of Power [i.e., God, Himself], and coming on the clouds of the sky." **63)** And the head priest tore at his clothing [i.e., as an expression of frustration] and said, "What additional need do we have for witnesses? **64)** You [yourselves] have heard him speaking against God. What do you people think [i.e., about such statements]?"

And they all condemned Him as deserving the death penalty. **65)** And some of them began to spit on Him, then to cover His face [with a blindfold] and hit Him [with their fists], saying, "Prophecy [i.e., tell who hit you]." And the officers in charge of Him also struck Him with their hands.

66) Now when Peter was in the courtyard downstairs [i.e., from where the Sanhedrin was having its meeting. See verse 55], one of the head priest's servant girls came in, **67)** and seeing Peter warming himself by the fire, she looked at him and said, "You were

with Jesus from Nazareth, too." 68) But he denied it, saying, "I do not know or understand what you are talking about." Then he went out onto the porch and the rooster crowed. 69) When the servant girl saw him [there], she again began saying to those nearby, "This man is one of them [i.e., a disciple of Jesus]." 70) But again he denied it.

Then after a little while those standing nearby said to Peter again, "We know for sure that you are one of them because you are from Galilee." [Note: Peter's accent gave him away. See Matt. 26:73]. 71) Then Peter began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know this man you are talking about." 72) Immediately the rooster crowed for the second time and Peter was reminded of the words of Jesus, who had said to him, "You will deny [knowing] me three times before the rooster crows twice." And as he thought about this, he cried.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1) As soon as it was morning the leading priests, along with the [Jewish] elders and experts in the law of Moses and the entire Council, held a conference. Then they tied Jesus up, led Him away and turned Him over to Pilate [the Roman governor]. 2) Pilate asked Him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus answered him, "You have said so."

3) [Then] the leading priests accused Him of many things. 4) So, Pilate again asked Him, "Do you not have any answer? Look at how many charges they are bringing against you." 5) But still Jesus gave no answer to anything, so that Pilate was amazed.

6) Now at the Passover Festival Pilate customarily released whatever prisoner the people asked him to. 7) One prisoner, named Barabbas, was kept chained up in prison along with men who had committed murder during a rebellion. 8) The crowd [then] went to Pilate and asked him to do what he was accustomed to doing for them [i.e., release a prisoner of their choosing during the Passover Festival]. 9) Pilate answered them, "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews [i.e., Jesus]?" 10) For he perceived that the leading priests had turned Jesus over to him out of envy. 11) But the leading priests stirred up the crowd to insist that Pilate release Barabbas to them instead. 12) [So], Pilate again asked them, "Then what shall I do to this one you call the king of the Jews?" 13) And

they shouted out again, "Crucify him!" **14)** And Pilate said to them, "Why [should we]; what wrong has he done?" But they shouted out even louder, "Crucify him." **15)** So Pilate, wanting to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them, and after he had Jesus flogged, he turned Him over to be crucified.

16) Then the soldiers led Jesus away to the courtyard of the governor's headquarters, where they assembled the entire battalion. **17)** They placed a purple robe on Him [Note: Matt. 27:28 calls this a "scarlet" robe. In that day, any color with a mixture of "red" in it was often called "purple"], and making a wreath out of thorns, they placed it on His head. **18)** Then they began "greeting" Him with "Hey, king of the Jews!" **19)** They beat His head with a stick, spat on Him, knelt down before Him and [mockingly] worshiped Him. **20)** And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple robe off of Him and put His own clothing [back] on Him. Then they led Him out to crucify Him.

21) They forced a passerby, named Simon of Cyrene [Note: This was a city in the northern African country of Libya], the father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the countryside, to go with them so he could carry Jesus' cross [i.e., probably only the cross-beam portion].

22) Then they brought Jesus to the place called *Golgotha* which, being interpreted, means "the place of the skull" [i.e., probably because it was a skull-shaped knoll in appearance]. **23)** They offered Him wine, mixed with aromatic spices, but He refused to accept it. [Note: Matt. 27:34 calls this "gall," a bitter drug for the purpose of dulling the pain of crucifixion]. **24)** So, they crucified Him and divided His clothing by gambling for them to decide what each soldier would get.

25) It was nine o'clock in the morning and they crucified Him. [Note: John 19:14 indicates that the crucifixion took place about noon. This can be harmonized if we take Mark's account to mean when the entire process began]. **26)** The inscription, stating the charge against Him, was attached above His head [i.e., to the upright portion of the cross]. It read, "The king of the Jews." **27)** And they also crucified two thieves with Him, one at His right side and one at His left. { {Some ancient manuscripts add verse **28)** "And the Scripture was fulfilled, which said, 'He was counted with the lawbreakers.'" } } **29)** And those who passed by the cross shouted abuse at Him and shook their heads [in derision], saying, "Ha, you who said you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days, **30)** save yourself [from dying] and come down from the

cross."

31) In the same way, the leading priests also mocked Him among themselves, along with the experts in the law of Moses, saying, "He saved other people, now he cannot even save himself. 32) This 'Christ, the king of Israel,' let him now come down from the cross so we can see it and believe in him." And the thieves who were being crucified with Him also spoke abusively to Him.

33) And when it became noon there was darkness over the entire land until three o'clock in the afternoon. 34) Then at three o'clock Jesus shouted in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama, sabachthani?*" [Note: These words were in the commonly spoken Aramaic language], which being interpreted, means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 35) And when some of those standing there heard this, they said, "Look, he is calling for Elijah." 36) Then one of the soldiers ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a stick and gave it to Him to drink, saying, "Let him alone; let us see if Elijah comes to take him down [from the cross]." 37) Then Jesus spoke in a loud voice and gave up His spirit [to God. See Luke 23:46].

38) Then the Temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. 39) And when the military officer in charge of one hundred men, who was standing in front of Jesus, saw Him die like that, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

40) And there were also some women watching all this from a distance. Among them were Mary from Magdala; Mary the mother of the younger James and [his brother] Joseph [i.e., probably the wife of Clopas. See John 19:25]; and Salome [i.e., the mother of James and John and wife of Zebedee. See Matt. 27:56]. 41) These women had ministered to Jesus' needs when they followed Him from Galilee. Others watching were many women who had come up to Jerusalem with Him.

42) When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation [for the Passover Festival], being the day before the [special] Sabbath Day, 43) Joseph, from Arimathea, a highly respected member of the [Jewish] Council, who was expecting the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate [i.e., the Roman appointed governor] and asked [him] for the body of Jesus. 44) Pilate was amazed that Jesus had already died, and calling the military officer to him, asked how long He had been dead. 45) And when he found out from the military officer, he granted the body to Joseph. 46) [Joseph

then] brought a linen cloth, and after taking Jesus down from the cross, wrapped the linen cloth around His body and placed it in a grave site that had been cut out of [a ledge of] rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the cave. 47) [Now] Mary from Magdala and Mary the mother of Joseph [See verse 40] saw where the body was laid.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1) Now when the Sabbath day was over [i.e., after sunset on Saturday evening], Mary from Magdala; Mary the mother of James [i.e., the "other Mary" of Matt. 28:1, who was probably Jesus' mother. See Matt. 27:56]; and Salome [i.e., the mother of James and John and wife of Zebedee. See Matt. 27:56], bought spices [i.e., consisting of aloes and other aromatic perfumes] in order to apply them to His body [i.e., as a means of embalming]. 2) And very early on the first day of the week, after sunrise [i.e., on Sunday morning], they went to the grave site. 3) They were questioning among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the entrance of the cave for us?" 4) And when they looked up, they saw that the stone had [already been] rolled away, and it was very large. 5) As they were entering the cave, they were amazed when they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting at the right side of the entrance. 6) He said to them, "Do not be amazed. You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was crucified, [are you not]? He has risen from the dead. He is not here. Look at the place where they laid Him. 7) So, go and tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see Him there, just as He told you.'" 8) So, they left, running out of the cave, [and] trembling with amazement. And they said nothing to anyone about this for they were afraid.

9) Now when Jesus arose from the dead early on the first day of the week [i.e., Sunday morning], He appeared first to Mary from Magdala, from whom He had driven out seven evil spirits. 10) Then she went and told those disciples who had been with Him what had happened. They were sorrowful and began to cry. 11) And when they heard that Jesus was alive and had been seen by Mary from Magdala, they refused to believe it.

12) After these things happened, Jesus showed Himself in a different form to two disciples [Note: One was named Cleopas. See Luke 24:13-

18], as they were walking out into the countryside [i.e., to the village of Emmaus, about seven miles northwest of Jerusalem. See Luke 24:13]. 13) And these two men went and told about their encounter with Jesus to the rest of the disciples, but they did not believe them either.

14) Later on Jesus showed Himself to the eleven apostles as they sat [i.e., reclined. See Matt. 26:7], eating a meal. He scolded them for their lack of faith and stubbornness because they refused to believe those who had seen Him [alive] after His resurrection. 15) Then He said to them, "You [men] go into the entire world and preach the good news to every person. 16) The person who believes [i.e., the Gospel] and is immersed will be saved [i.e., from condemnation], but whoever does not believe it will be condemned. 17) And these [miraculous] signs will attend [the conversion of] those who believe [Note: This refers to the supernatural miracles performed by the apostles and their associates during the apostolic age. See verse 20 and Acts 2:43]. In my name [i.e., by my authority], they will drive out evil spirits; they will speak in languages [supernaturally]; 18) they will pick up snakes [i.e., without being harmed]; and if they happen to drink anything poisonous, it will not harm them; they will place hands on sick people [i.e., with prayer] and they will be healed."

19) So then, after the Lord Jesus had spoken to them He was taken up to heaven, where He sat down at the right side of God. 20) And the apostles [See verses 14-15] went out and preached everywhere. The Lord worked with them and confirmed the message [i.e., verified that it was true] by means of the [miraculous] signs which accompanied their ministry. May it be so.

LUKE

CHAPTER ONE

1) Your Excellency Theophilus: Since so many people have undertaken the task of compiling a narrative of events that have happened among us, 2) [that is, people] who were ministers of the word and original eyewitnesses [of these events], and who passed them on to us; [and since] 3) I have thoroughly investigated the entire series of events [myself], I felt it would be good for me also to write you an orderly account of them. 4) Then you could know how reliable the information is that you have been told.

5) In the days of King Herod, of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias of the "Abijah" division. He had a wife named Elizabeth who was a descendant of Aaron. 6) They both did what was right in God's sight [by] living blamelessly according to all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. 7) But they had no children, because Elizabeth was unable to bear offspring due to their both being very old.

8) Now it happened that when Zacharias' turn came in his division, 9) to perform his customary duties as a priest before God, he drew the responsibility [that day] of entering the Temple of the Lord to burn the incense offering. [Note: This was done on a golden Altar in the Temple by a priest twice a day]. 10) There was a whole crowd of people praying outside because it was the time for burning the incense offering.

11) Just then an angel from the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the incense altar. 12) Zacharias became disturbed when he saw the angel and was gripped by fear. 13) But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid Zacharias, for your earnest prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will give birth to a son and you will name him John. 14) And you will have joy and happiness and many people will rejoice when he is born. 15) For he will be great in the sight of the Lord and he will not drink any wine or intoxicating drinks [Note: This restriction suggests that John may have taken the special vow of consecration making him a "Nazarite"]. And he will be filled with the Holy Spirit from the time he is born. 16) And he will [influence] many Israelites to turn to the Lord their God. 17) He will go on ahead of the

Messiah [See verse 76], in the spirit and power of Elijah, to rekindle the affections of fathers for their children, and [to influence] disobedient people to live wisely like righteous people. And he will prepare the people to be ready for [the coming of] the Lord." 18) And Zacharias said to the angel, "How will I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is [also] very old." 19) The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. 20) And consider this, you will [have to] remain a mute and be unable to speak until the day when these things happen because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in due time."

21) Now the people who waited [outside] for Zacharias were very surprised that he was staying in the Temple so long. 22) And when he [finally] came out, he was not able to talk to them. Then they realized he had seen a vision while in the Temple. So, he remained a mute and had to make [hand] signs to them [i.e., in order to be understood].

23) And so it happened, when he had completed the [required] days of his ministry, he went home.

24) After those days, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and she stayed in seclusion for five months, saying, 25) "The Lord has done this for me, and at this time [in my life] He has favored me by removing the stigma placed on me by people [i.e., for not having children]."

26) Now in the sixth month [of Elizabeth's pregnancy] the angel Gabriel was sent from God to the Galilean town of Nazareth, 27) to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28) The angel came to her and said, "Greetings, you are someone greatly favored [i.e., by God]; the Lord is with you." 29) But she became very troubled by what he said and wondered what such a greeting could mean. 30) Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid Mary, for you have received favor from God. 31) And consider this, you will become pregnant and give birth to a son and you will name Him Jesus. 32) He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest [i.e., God], and the Lord will give Him the throne of His forefather King David. 33) And He will rule over the [spiritual] descendants of Jacob forever and there will be no end to His kingdom." 34) And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have never had sex with a man?" 35) The angel answered,

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Highest [i.e., God] will overshadow you. Therefore, the child you carry will be called the holy Son of God. 36) And consider this, your relative Elizabeth is also pregnant with a son in spite of her old age, and [even though] she was said to be unable to have children, she is now six months along. 37) For nothing that God says [will happen] is impossible." 38) And Mary said, "Here I am, the Lord's slave-girl; let it happen to me according to what you say." Then the angel left her.

39) About that time Mary made a hurried trip to a Judean town in the hill country. [Note: This was the same province in which Jerusalem was located]. 40) [Upon arriving] she entered the home of Zacharias and greeted [his wife] Elizabeth. 41) And it happened when Elizabeth heard Mary greet her, the baby in Elizabeth's womb "kicked," and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42) Then she spoke out in a loud voice and said, "[Mary], you are [truly] blessed [from] among [all] women, and the child you will bear [i.e., Jesus] is blessed [as well]. 43) But why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to [visit] me? 44) For listen, when I heard your voice greeting me, the baby in my womb "kicked" for joy. 45) And she who [has] believed [the promises made by the Lord] is [truly] blessed, for the things which have been spoken to her [i.e., to Mary] by the Lord will [indeed] be fulfilled."

46) Then Mary said, "My soul lifts up the Lord, 47) and my spirit has rejoiced in God, my Savior. 48) For He has looked favorably on the humble circumstances of His servant-girl. And consider this, all generations of people will call me 'blessed' from now on. 49) For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and His name is holy. 50) He shows mercy to generation after generation of people who have reverence for Him. 51) He has demonstrated power with His arm. He has scattered those who are proud in the thoughts of their heart. 52) He has dethroned rulers and has exalted humble people. 53) He has filled the hungry with good things and has sent the rich away empty-handed. 54) (As He said to our forefathers), He has helped His servants, the Israelites, [showing] that He remembered to be merciful 55) to Abraham and his descendants forever."

56) So, Mary stayed with [her relative] Elizabeth for about three months [i.e., until about the time John was born. See 1:26-31], and then returned to her home.

57) Now when Elizabeth was due to deliver, she gave birth to a son. **58)** When her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had extended great mercy toward her [i.e., in giving her a child], they rejoiced with her.

59) And it happened on the eighth day [i.e., since the baby was born] that they came to circumcise the child [i.e., to perform the Jewish rite of identity, signifying the responsibility to observe the law of Moses]. And they [i.e., probably the neighbors and/or relatives of Elizabeth and Zacharias] suggested that they name him Zacharias, after his father. **60)** But his mother answered, "No, he will be named John." **61)** And they replied to her, "[But] there are not any of your relatives named that." **62)** And [so] they made [hand] signs to the [baby's] father to find out what he wanted to name him. **63)** Then Zacharias asked for a writing tablet and wrote [the words] "His name is John." And they were all amazed. **64)** Just then his mouth was capable of uttering speech, and his tongue could form words, and he praised God. **65)** Then all those who lived in the area became afraid; and people were talking about all these things throughout the entire hill country of Judea. **66)** And everyone who heard about this incident remembered it [i.e., for some time]. They were saying, "What will this child become? For the hand of the Lord was [surely] with him."

67) Then his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, **68)** "May the Lord be praised, [who is] the God of the Israelites, for He has come to [the aid of] His people and bought them back [i.e., from bondage]. **69)** He has provided a horn of salvation [i.e., His saving strength] for us from a descendant of His servant King David [i.e., Jesus, born of Mary] **70)** (as He spoke through the message of the holy prophets of long ago). **71)** [He has provided] salvation from our enemies, and from the [destructive] hand of all those who hate us, **72)** in order to show mercy to our forefathers and to remember His holy Agreement. **73)** [This Agreement was] the oath by which He swore to Abraham, our forefather, **74)** that we would be delivered from the [destructive] hand of our enemies and [then] serve Him without fear **75)** by living holy and righteous lives before Him all of our days. **76)** Yes, you [my] child [i.e., John], will be called the prophet of the Highest [i.e., God], for you will go ahead of the Lord's presence to prepare His ways. **77)** And [you will] provide the knowledge of salvation to His people, by

[granting them] the forgiveness of their sins 78) because of God's merciful compassion. Therefore, the morning sun from above will arise 79) to shine on those who are sitting in darkness and [are under] the shadow of death, and to direct our feet into the way of peace."

80) So, the child [i.e., John] grew and became strong in [his] spirit and stayed in the desert until the day when he appeared publicly to the Israelites.

CHAPTER TWO

1) Now it happened in those days that a decree was sent out from Caesar Augustus [the Emperor of the Roman Empire] requiring [people from] the whole empire to be registered [i.e., for taxation purposes]. 2) This was the first registration made while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3) And everyone went to register in his own home town.

4) So, Joseph also went from the Galilean town of Nazareth to David's town, which was the Judean town of Bethlehem, because he was among the descendants and family of David. 5) [He went] to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him and who was pregnant [at the time]. 6) And it happened while they were there that the due date came for her to have the baby. 7) So, she bore her firstborn Son and wrapped Him in [linen] cloths and laid Him in an animal's feeding trough because there was no room for them in the lodge.

8) Now there were [some] shepherds in that region who were living in the fields and guarding their flocks [of sheep] at night. 9) [Suddenly] an angel from the Lord [was seen] standing near them and the glorious presence of the Lord shone around them, and they were very afraid. 10) And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for look, I am bringing good news that will cause great joy to all people. 11) For a Savior has been born today in David's city [i.e., Bethlehem], who is Christ the Lord [i.e., God's specially chosen one]. 12) And this is the sign [that will verify it] to you: You will find a baby wrapped in [linen] cloths lying in an animal's feeding trough."

13) Then suddenly there appeared with the angel a large number of the heavenly "army" [i.e., of angels], who were praising God and saying, 14) "May there be glory to God in the highest

[heavens], and may there be peace on earth among men who are pleasing to God." 15) And it happened when the angels left them and returned to heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go to Bethlehem now and see what all happened that the Lord told us about." 16) So, they went quickly and found both Mary and Joseph with the baby, lying in the animal's feeding trough. 17) And when they saw this, they told [everyone] what the angel had said about this baby. 18) And all who heard it marvelled at the things the shepherds told them. 19) But Mary treasured all these things and wondered about them [often]. 20) Then the shepherds returned [to their fields], honoring and praising God for everything they had heard and seen, for it all happened just as they had been told.

21) Eight days later it was time to circumcise Jesus [i.e., to perform the Jewish rite of identity, signifying the responsibility to observe the law of Moses], and they named Him Jesus, which was the name given by the angel before He was [even] conceived.

22) Then when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were completed [Note: This was a set procedure required for a Jewish mother on the birth of a child. See Lev. 12:1-8], Joseph and Mary brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. 23) (It is recorded in the law of the Lord [Ex. 13:2, 12] that every firstborn male child be considered holy [i.e., specially dedicated] to the Lord.) 24) They came to offer a sacrifice of two doves or two young pigeons, in accordance with what is written in the law of Moses.

25) Now there was a righteous and devoted man named Simeon at Jerusalem, who was expecting the consolation of the Israelites [i.e., the coming of the Messiah to save them], and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26) Now it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ [i.e., God's, specially chosen one]. 27) And he was led by the Holy Spirit into the Temple, and when Joseph and Mary brought the baby Jesus in, so they could do to Him what was customary under the law of Moses, 28) Simeon took Jesus in his arms, praised God and said, 29) "Master, you may now allow your servant to be released [i.e., die] in peace, according to what you said. 30) For my eyes have seen your salvation [i.e., Jesus], 31) which [i.e., whom] you have prepared before all people [i.e., for their benefit], 32) [to be] a light for revealing [God's way of salvation] to the [unconverted] Gentiles, and a [source of] glory to your people, the Israelites."

33) And Jesus' [step-] father and His mother were amazed at the things said about Him. **34)** Then Simeon asked God to bless them and said to Jesus' mother Mary, "Look, many Israelites will be caused to fall [i.e., into spiritual ruin] or rise [i.e., to spiritual renewal] because of Him. And [He will be] a 'sign' [for people] to speak against, **35)** and thus reveal the thoughts of many hearts. Yes, and a sword will cut you [Mary] to the heart [i.e., cause you inward pain]."

36) And there was a woman prophet named Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, from the tribe of Asher [i.e., she was a descendant of one of Jacob's son]. (She was very old, having lived with her husband for [only] seven years after being married, **37)** and has been a widow [all these years], and is now eighty-four years old.) She has never left the Temple, but worships [God] by fasting [i.e., going without food and/or water for religious reasons] and praying night and day. **38)** She came forward at that very time and thanked God [in prayer] and spoke about the child [Jesus] to everyone [in the Temple area] who was expecting the redemption of the people of Jerusalem [i.e., their liberation from sin].

39) So, when Joseph and Mary had completed everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to their [current home] town of Nazareth, in Galilee. **40)** And the child [i.e., Jesus] grew and became strong. He was filled with wisdom and God's favor was upon Him.

41) Now Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem every year to attend the Passover Festival. [Note: This was the annual Jewish festival commemorating Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage under Moses' leadership]. **42)** When Jesus was twelve years old, they [all] went up to the Festival as usual. **43)** And when they had completed [all] the days [of festivities], and were returning [home], the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. Now His parents did not know this, **44)** so thinking He was in the caravan, they continued traveling for an entire day [before] they began looking for Him among their relatives and friends. **45)** And when they could not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for Him. **46)** And it happened after three days that they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the middle of the [Jewish] teachers, listening to them and asking questions. **47)** And all of them who heard Him were amazed at His understanding [i.e., of spiritual matters] and His answers [to questions they would ask Him]. **48)** When His parents [finally] saw Him, they were very surprised and His mother

asked Him, "Son, why have you treated us this way? Look, your [step-] father and I have been anxiously searching for you." 49) And He replied to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I had to be in my Father's house [i.e., the Temple]?" 50) But they did not understand what He meant when He said that to them.

51) So, Jesus went down to Nazareth with them and [continued] to obey them. And His mother kept all these things [stored up] in her heart.

52) And Jesus advanced in wisdom; He grew up and [increased] in favor with God and men.

CHAPTER THREE

1) Now it was the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was ruler of Galilee, his brother Philip was ruler of the regions of Ituraea and Trachonitus [Note: These two men were sons of Herod the Great (See Matt. 2:1) and ruled over provinces east of the Jordan River] and Lysanias was ruler of Abilene [Note: This was a province just north of the two previously mentioned ones]. 2) [During this time], while Annas and Caiphas [Note: This man was Annas' son-in-law. See John 18:13] were head priests, God's message came to John [the Immerser], son of Zacharias, [when he was] in the desert [of Judea]. 3) He went into the whole region around the Jordan River proclaiming that those immersed on the basis of their repentance [i.e., determining to change their hearts and lives] would receive the forgiveness of sins [from God]. 4) This was according to what is written in the book containing the words of Isaiah, the prophet [Isa. 40:3ff], "The voice of a man who speaks out in the desert [urging people] to make the road for the Lord ready [for Him to travel]; to make a straight pathway for Him [to walk on]. 5) Every valley will be filled up and every mountain and hill will be leveled. And crooked [roads] will become straight and rough ones smoothed out. 6) And all mankind will see the salvation of God [i.e., become available to them]."

7) He said to the crowds of people that went out [to the desert] to be immersed by him, "You children of snakes, who warned you to run away from the coming wrath [of God]? 8) Demonstrate by your lives that you have [really] repented, and quit saying to yourselves, 'We claim Abraham as our forefather,' because I tell you,

God is able to make Abraham's children out of these stones. 9) And even now the axe is also ready to chop down the trees [i.e., you Jewish people]. Every tree [i.e., person] that does not produce wholesome fruit [i.e., a godly life] will be cut down and thrown into the fire [i.e., the punishment of hell]."

10) Then the crowds asked him, "What then must we do [i.e., to demonstrate our repentance]?" 11) And he answered them, "The person who has two coats should give [one of them] to the person who does not have any; and the person who has food should do the same thing."

12) Then some tax collectors came to him to be immersed and asked him, "Teacher, what must we do [i.e., to demonstrate our repentance]?" 13) And he answered them, "Do not collect any more [tax money] than you are required to."

14) Some soldiers on duty also asked him, "And what must we do [i.e., to demonstrate our repentance]?" And he answered them, "Do not force people to give you money or accuse them falsely, and be content with your pay."

15) Now as people were anticipating [what would happen] and everyone was wondering in their hearts if perhaps John were the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one], 16) John answered [their concerns] by saying to all of them, "I am [the one] immersing you in water, but One who is more powerful than I will follow my [ministry]. I am not [even] worthy to loosen the straps of His sandals. He will immerse you people with the Holy Spirit and with fire [i.e., the punishment of hell. See Matt. 3:10-12]. 17) His separating shovel is in His hand and He will completely clear off His threshing floor [i.e., by removing all of the husks]. And He will gather the wheat into His barn, but will burn up the husks with a fire that will never go out."

18) So, John preached the good news to the people with many different appeals. 19) But because he had rebuked Herod, the tetrarch, for [marrying] his brother's wife Herodias, and for all the other bad things he had done, 20) to top it off, Herod put John in prison.

21) Now it happened when all the people had been immersed [by John], that Jesus was also immersed [by him]. And while Jesus was praying, heaven was opened 22) and the Holy Spirit came down on Him in a physical form, as a dove, and a voice spoke out of heaven

[saying], "You are my dearly loved Son. I am very pleased with you."

23) And Jesus was about thirty years old when He began to teach. (It was assumed that) He was the son of Joseph, who was the [legal] son of Heli [Note: A lineage through Jesus' mother Mary follows:] **24)** [Heli was] the son of Matthat, who was the son of Levi, who was the son of Melchi, who was the son of Jannai, who was the son of Joseph, **25)** who was the son of Mattathias, who was the son of Amos, who was the son of Nahum, who was the son of Esli, who was the son of Naggai, **26)** who was the son of Maath, who was the son of Mattathias, who was the son of Semein, who was the son of Josech, who was the son of Joda, **27)** who was the son of Joanan, who was the son of Rhesa, who was the son of Zerubbabel, who was the son of Shealtiel, who was the son of Neri, **28)** who was the son of Melchi, who was the son of Addi, who was the son of Cosam, who was the son of Elmadam, who was the son of Er, **29)** who was the son of Jesus, who was the son of Eliezer, who was the son of Jorim, who was the son of Matthat, who was the son of Levi, **30)** who was the son of Symeon, who was the son of Judas, who was the son of Joseph, who was the son of Jonam, who was the son of Eliakim, **31)** who was the son of Melea, who was the son of Menna, who was the son of Mattatha, who was the son of Nathan, who was the son of David.

32) [And David] was the son of Jesse, who was the son of Obed, who was the son of Boaz, who was the son of Salmon, who was the son of Nahshan, **33)** who was the son of Amminadab, {{Some ancient manuscripts insert "who was the son of Admim"}}, who was the son of Arni, who was the son of Hezron, who was the son of Perez, who was the son of Judah, **34)** who was the son of Jacob, who was the son of Isaac, who was the son of Abraham.

[And Abraham] was the son of Terah, who was the son of Nahor, **35)** who was the son of Serug, who was the son of Reu, who was the son of Peleg, who was the son of Eber, who was the son of Shelah, **36)** who was the son of Cainan, who was the son of Arphaxad, who was the son of Shem, who was the son of Noah, who was the son of Lamech, **37)** who was the son of Methuselah, who was the son of Enoch, who was the son of Jared, who was the son of Mahalaleel, who was the son of Cainan, **38)** who was the son of Enos, who was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam.

[And Adam] was the son of God.

CHAPTER FOUR

1) Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River [i.e., where He had been immersed. See 3:21] and was led by the Holy Spirit [See Matt. 4:1] into the desert. 2) During the forty days He was being put to the test by the devil, He did not eat anything; then after it was over He was [very] hungry.

3) Then the devil said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to turn into bread." 4) But Jesus answered him, "It is written [Deut. 8:3], 'A person is not to live by [eating] bread only.'" 5) Then he led Him up [i.e., to a high mountain. See Matt. 4:8] and showed Him all the world's kingdoms in a fleeting instant. 6) And the devil said to Him, "I will give you full authority [over them] and their splendor, for it has [all] been granted to me and to whom I want to give it. 7) Therefore, if you will worship in front of me it will all be yours." 8) And Jesus answered him, "It is written [Deut. 6:13], 'You are supposed to worship the Lord, your God, and serve only Him.'"

9) Then the devil led Jesus to Jerusalem and placed Him on the elevated wing of the Temple and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, 10) for it is written [Psa. 91:11-12], 'He will put his angels in charge of you, to protect you,' 11) and 'They will lift you up with their hands so you do not trip over a stone.'" 12) And Jesus answered him, "It is said [Deut. 6:16], 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

13) And when the devil had finished every test, he left Jesus until a [later] time.

14) Then Jesus returned to Galilee with power from the Holy Spirit; and a report about Him spread through all the surrounding region. 15) And He was honored by everyone [as] He taught in their [Jewish] synagogues.

16) Jesus then went to Nazareth where He had been brought up. He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day, according to His custom, and stood up to read [the Scriptures]. 17) The book [i.e., actually a scroll] of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. He opened the book and found the passage where it was written [Isa. 61:1f], 18) "The Holy Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me [i.e., specially chose me] to preach good news to poor people. He has

sent me to proclaim freedom to those who are captives [i.e., to sin]; recovery of sight to the [spiritually as well as physically] blind; to set free those who are oppressed [i.e., by Satan] and 19) to proclaim the year of the Lord's acceptance [i.e., the time when people would become His obedient followers]."

20) Then He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were focused on Him. 21) He began speaking to them [saying], "Today this [passage of] Scripture has been fulfilled as you listened to it."

22) So, everyone spoke well of Him and marvelled at the gracious words coming from His mouth. They said, "Is he not Joseph's son?" 23) And He replied to them, "No doubt you will tell me this proverb, 'Doctor, heal yourself,' and 'Perform [the miracles] here in your own home town also that we heard you did in Capernaum.'"

24) And He said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is acceptable in his own home town. 25) But it is true when I tell you, [while] there were many widows [living] in Israel during the time of Elijah, when it did not rain for three and a half years, causing a great famine over the entire land, 26) Elijah was not sent to any of them, except to a widow in Zarephath [i.e., a Gentile town] in the region of Sidon. 27) And [while] there were many people with infectious skin diseases [living] in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet, none of them was healed except Naaman, the Syrian" [who was also a Gentile].

28) Then everyone in the synagogue became extremely angry when they heard these things. 29) They rose up and threw Jesus out of the city, leading Him to the top of the hill on which the city was built, in order to throw Him down [from a cliff]. 30) But He [just] walked right through them and went on His way.

31) Then He went down to the Galilean city of Capernaum and taught the Jews on the Sabbath day. 32) They were amazed at His teaching for He spoke with authority.

33) Now there was a man in the synagogue who was dominated by the spirit of an evil demon [Note: These "evil spirits" or "demons" were powerful beings sent by Satan to inhabit people, causing physical, mental and spiritual harm to them]. He was shouting with a loud voice, 34) "Ha! What business do we have with you, Jesus from Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are; [you are] God's Holy One." 35) Then Jesus spoke sternly to the evil spirit [in the man], saying, "Be

quiet, and come out of him." And when the evil spirit had thrown the man down in front of them, it came out of him, without causing any harm. 36) And everyone became amazed and began saying to one another, "What is he saying? For he orders the evil spirits with authority and power to come out [of people], and they do." 37) Then a report about Him spread to the entire surrounding region.

38) So, He left the synagogue and entered Simon's [i.e., Peter's] house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was [in bed] stricken with a high fever. And they [i.e., Andrew, James and John, besides Peter. See Mark 1:29] begged Him [to do something] for her. 39) So, He stood over her and spoke sternly to the fever. It left her and she got up [out of bed] and began serving them.

40) And when the sun was setting, everyone who had friends or relatives who were sick with various diseases brought them to Jesus and He placed His hands on each one of them and healed them. 41) And evil spirits also came out of many people, shouting [at Him], "You are the Son of God." And Jesus spoke sternly to them and would not allow them to speak [anymore] because they knew He was the Christ [Note: Jesus would not accept the endorsement of these Satanic spirits].

42) And when it became daylight He left [Simon's house] and went to a deserted place [i.e., to pray. See Mark 1:35]. The crowds were looking for Him and [upon finding Him] went to Him and tried to discourage Him from leaving them. 43) But He told them, "I must go to other towns also to preach the good news of God's [coming] kingdom, for this is why I was sent [by God]."

44) So, He [went and] preached in the [Jewish] synagogues of Judea [also].

CHAPTER FIVE

1) Now it happened while Jesus was standing on the shore of Lake Genneseret [i.e., Lake Galilee] that the crowd was pushing closer to Him to hear God's message. 2) He saw two boats [tied up] along the shore of the lake, for the fishermen had left them [there] and were washing their nets [i.e., on the beach]. 3) So, He entered one of the boats that belonged to Simon [i.e., Peter], and asked him to launch out a short distance from shore. Then He sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

4) And when He had finished talking, He said to Simon,

"Launch out into deeper water and lower your nets for a catch [of fish]." 5) Simon replied, "Master, we worked all night, but did not catch anything. But I will lower the nets if you say so." 6) And when they had done this, they gathered in a large number of fish [until] their nets began to break. 7) So, they motioned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. When they came, they filled both boats until they began to sink. 8) But when Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, because I am a sinful man." 9) For he and those who were with him were amazed at the [huge] quantity of fish they had caught. 10) Simon's partners James and John, sons of Zebedee, were also amazed. So, Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will catch people." 11) And when they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.

12) And it happened while Jesus was in one of the towns [i.e., surrounding Lake Galilee], that a man covered with an infectious skin disease appeared and, when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face [to the ground] and begged Him, saying, "If you want to, you can heal me." [Note: Throughout this narrative the terms "heal/healing" are originally "clean/cleansing" because the Jews viewed a person with such a disease as ceremonially "unclean." See Lev. 13:1-3]. 13) Then He reached out His hand and touched the man, saying, "I [do] want to; be healed." And immediately the infectious skin disease left him. 14) Then He ordered the man not to tell anyone [about the healing]; saying, "Go on your way and show yourself to the priest and offer the proper sacrifice for your healing that Moses required [Lev. 13:49; 14:2ff] as evidence to people [that you were healed]." 15) But the news about what Jesus had done spread all the more widely, so that large crowds assembled to listen to Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. 16) So, He went away to deserted places and prayed.

17) And it happened on one of those days [in Capernaum. See Mark 2:1], as He was teaching, that some Pharisees [i.e., a strict sect of the Jewish religion] and teachers of the law of Moses, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem, were sitting around [i.e., listening to Him]. And the power of the Lord was with Him, enabling Him to heal people. 18) Just then [four] men [See Mark 2:3] brought a paralyzed man on a cot and attempted to place him in front of Jesus. 19) But because they could not find a [suitable] way to get him in [to the house] because of the people

crowded [around], they went up to the housetop [Note: This was a flat area, where people retired for rest, prayer, etc., with a stairway accessible from the outside] and lowered the man on his cot through the roof tiles into the presence of Jesus. 20) And when He saw the evidence of their faith, He said, "Man, your sins are forgiven."

21) Then the experts in the law of Moses and the Pharisees began to reason [in their minds], saying, "Who is this man who speaks things against God [i.e., by claiming the ability to forgive sins]? Who can forgive sins except God only?" 22) But Jesus perceived their reasonings and answered them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? 23) Which is easier; to say [to the paralyzed man], 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? 24) But so you will know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins, (He then said to the paralyzed man), 'I say to you, get up, pick up your cot and go home.'" 25) So, immediately he stood up in front of them and picked up what he had been lying on [i.e., his cot], and went home, giving honor to God. 26) And everyone was filled with amazement; they gave honor to God and were overwhelmed with reverence, saying, "We have seen incredible things today."

27) Then after these things happened, Jesus went out [i.e., probably walking along a street] and saw a publican [Note: This was a person with a bad reputation for dishonest tax collecting activities] named Matthew [i.e., the same as Levi. See Mark 2:14] sitting at the toll booth [collecting taxes] and said, "Become my follower." 28) So, Matthew gave up everything, got up and followed Jesus.

29) Then Levi prepared a lavish dinner for Jesus at his house. A large number of [other] tax collectors were [also] having dinner with them. 30) Now the Pharisees and their experts in the law of Moses complained to Jesus' disciples, saying, "Why do you men eat and drink with tax collectors and worldly people?" 31) And Jesus answered them, "People who are healthy do not need a doctor, but [only] sick people do. 32) I did not come to call those who are doing right to repent [i.e., to change their hearts and lives], but [only those who are] sinners."

33) Then they said to Jesus, "John [the Immerser's] disciples fast frequently [i.e., go without food and/or drink for religious reasons] and they offer earnest prayer requests, and the disciples of the Pharisees do the same things. But your disciples eat and drink."

34) Jesus answered them, "Can you force the companions of the groom to fast while the groom is [still] with them? **35)** But the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them [Note: Jesus here refers to Himself]. Then they will fast at that time."

36) And He told them a parable [i.e., a brief story to illustrate His teaching]: "No one tears a piece [of cloth] from a new item of clothing and sews it on an old one. If he does, it will tear the new one. And besides, the piece [of cloth] from the new clothing will not match the old one. **37)** And no one puts freshly squeezed grape juice into previously used bottles made of animal skins. [If he does], the newly squeezed juice will [crack and] burst the [dried out] animal skins and [all the juice will] spill out, and the animal skin bottles will [also] become useless. **38)** But freshly squeezed grape juice must be put into newly made animal skins. **39)** And no one who has drunk aged wine wants newly squeezed [juice], for he says, 'The older [grape juice] is better.'"

CHAPTER SIX

1) Now it happened on a Sabbath day that Jesus was walking through some grainfields. His disciples picked off some heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands and ate [the kernels]. [Note: It was an accepted practice for people in that day to be permitted to do this as they walked along paths bordering a grainfield]. **2)** But certain Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is against the law of Moses on the Sabbath day?" **3)** And Jesus answered them, "Have you never read about what King David did when he and his men were hungry [I Sam. 21:6]; **4)** how he entered the house of God [i.e., the Temple] and took some 'Bread of Presence' and ate it, and also gave some to his men to eat? [This practice] was not permissible according to the law of Moses, [since the bread was reserved] only for the priests." **5)** Then He said to them, "The Son of man is lord [i.e., has authority over] the Sabbath day."

6) And it happened on another Sabbath day, when Jesus entered the synagogue to teach, that a man was there whose right hand was deformed. **7)** And the experts in the law of Moses were watching Him to see if He would heal [someone] on the Sabbath day, so they could figure out how to accuse Him. **8)** But He knew what they were thinking. Then He said to the man with the deformed hand, "Get up, step forward in front of everyone." So, he got up and stepped

forward. 9) Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it permitted by the law of Moses to do something good or to do something harmful on the Sabbath day? To save a life or to destroy it?" 10) Then He looked around at all of them [there] and said to the man, "Reach out your hand." And [when] he did this, his hand was restored [to normal use]. 11) But the experts in the law of Moses and the Pharisees became furious and began discussing among themselves what they could do to Jesus.

12) And it happened during that time that Jesus went out to the mountain [i.e., probably a hillside near Capernaum] to pray, and continued praying to God all night. 13) And when it was daylight, He called His disciples and chose from among them twelve, whom He also called apostles. 14) [They were] Simon, also called Peter, and his brother Andrew, James and John [also brothers], Philip, Bartholomew [i.e., the same as Nathaniel. See John 1:45], 15) Matthew [i.e., the same as Levi. See Mark 2:14], Thomas [i.e., the same as Didymus. See John 11:16], James, the son of Alphaeus, Simon, called the Zealot [i.e., the same as the Cananean. See Matt. 10:4], 16) Judas, the son of James [i.e., the same as Thaddaeus. See Matt. 10:3] and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor [to Jesus].

17) Then He came down [from the mountain] with them and stood on a level place [where] a large crowd of His disciples and a large group of people had gathered to hear Him and be healed from their diseases. 18) And [also] those who were tormented by evil spirits were healed. 19) Then the whole crowd tried to touch Him because [supernatural] power was coming from His body, and He healed all of them.

20) Then He looked at His disciples and said, "Those of you who have a [sense of personal] need are blessed, because the kingdom of God belongs to you. 21) Those of you who now have an appetite [i.e., for doing what is right] are blessed, because you will be satisfied [eventually]. Those of you who cry now [i.e., over your sins] are blessed because you will laugh [i.e., when you are forgiven later]. 22) You are blessed when men hate you and withdraw their fellowship from you and speak abusively about you and reject your name as evil, [all] for being loyal to the Son of man. 23) Be happy at that time and jump for joy and realize that your reward in heaven will be great, for the forefathers [i.e., of your corrupt Jewish leaders] treated the prophets the same way. 24) But it is too bad for you rich people

because you have [already] received [all] the comforts [you are going to get]. 25) It is too bad for you people who have plenty to eat now, because you will be hungry [later on]. It is too bad for you people who are laughing now, because you will grieve and cry [later on]. 26) It is too bad for you people when everyone speaks well about you, because the forefathers said the same thing about the false prophets.

27) But I tell you people who are listening [to me], love your enemies and do good things to those who hate you. 28) [Ask God's] blessing on those who curse you; pray for those who treat you spitefully. 29) Whoever hits you on one side of the face, allow him [to hit you on] the other side also; and when someone takes away your coat, do not stop him from also taking away your shirt [i.e., if he insists on it]. 30) Give to everyone who asks you [for something] and do not demand that he bring back your possessions that he takes away. 31) And whatever you would like people to do to you, do the same thing to them. 32) And if you love [only] those who love you, what thanks do you deserve for doing that? For even worldly people love those who love them. 33) And if you do good things [only] to those who do good things to you, what thanks do you deserve for doing that? For even worldly people do that much. 34) And if you lend something [only] to those people from whom you expect to have it returned, what thanks do you deserve for doing that? Even worldly people lend to worldly people expecting to get the same things back. 35) But love your enemies and do good things to them; and lend to them without expecting it to be returned, and your reward [i.e., from God] will be great and you will be [considered] sons of the Highest [i.e., God]. For He is kind to unthankful and evil people [as well]. 36) You people should be merciful just like your Father is merciful. 37) And do not pass [hypocritical] judgment [on other people. See Matt. 7:1-5] and you will not receive such judgment [on yourselves]. And do not condemn [others] and you will not be condemned [yourselves]. Release people [i.e., from guilt for offending you] and you will be released [i.e., by God?] 38) Give [to others] and you will have [things] given to you. People will pour into your lap a full measure [of goods]; it will be pressed down, shaken together and running over [the edges]. Because the standard you use in giving [to others] will be the standard used [by them or God] in giving back to you."

39) Then Jesus told them a parable [i.e., a brief story to illustrate His teaching]: "Can a blind person lead a blind person? Will

not both of them fall into a ditch? 40) The disciple is not more important than his teacher, but when every person becomes complete, [then] he will be like his teacher. 41) And why do you look for the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye but ignore the board in your own eye? 42) Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take that speck of sawdust out of your eye,' when you cannot see the board in your own eye? You hypocrite, take the board out of your own eye first; then you will be able to see clearly enough to take out the speck of sawdust that is in your brother's eye. 43) For there is no healthy tree that produces bad fruit; nor is there a diseased tree that produces wholesome fruit. 44) For each tree is recognized by its own fruit. For people do not harvest figs from thorn bushes, nor grapes from a brier bush. 45) The good person produces good things from the goodness stored up in his heart. And the evil person produces bad things from the evil [stored up in his heart]. For his mouth speaks what his heart is filled with.

46) And why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and [yet] not obey what I tell you to do? 47) Every person who comes to me and listens to my words and obeys them, I will show you who he is like. 48) He is like a man building a house, who dug deep to lay the foundation on rock. And when a flood came the river pounded against that house, but could not shake it because it had been well built. 49) But the person who hears [my words] and does not obey them is like a man who built a house on the ground, without a foundation. [When] the river pounded against it, immediately it collapsed and the destruction of that house was complete."

CHAPTER SEVEN

1) After Jesus had finished telling the people all He had to say, He went into Capernaum.

2) And a certain military officer's slave [was there], whom the officer highly valued. This slave was [so] sick that he was about to die. 3) And when the officer heard about Jesus, he sent [some] Jewish elders to Him asking that He come and heal his slave. 4) And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying, "This officer deserves that you should do this for him [i.e., heal his slave], 5) for he loves our nation and he is the one who built the synagogue

for us." 6) So, Jesus went with them. And when He got close to the military officer's house, the officer sent [his] friends to Jesus, saying to Him [i.e., speaking on behalf of the military officer], "Sir, do not trouble yourself, for I do not deserve for you to come into my house; 7) [and] for the same reason I did not think I deserved to come to you either. So, [just] say the word and [I know] my slave will be healed. 8) For I also am a man [who was] placed under the authority [of others], and I have soldiers [who serve] under me. I can say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another one, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." 9) And when Jesus heard these things, He was amazed and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I tell you, I have never found [anyone with] such great faith, not [even] among the Israelites." 10) And those who were sent [i.e., the officer's friends. See verse 6] returned to the house and found the slave completely well.

11) And it happened soon after this that Jesus went to a town called Nain [Note: This was a town of Galilee about 6 miles southeast of Nazareth]. His disciples and a large crowd [also] went with Him. 12) Now when He approached the town gate, He saw a dead man being carried out; it was the only son of his widowed mother. And many people from the town were with her. 13) Now when the Lord saw her, He felt very sorry for her and said to her, "Do not cry." 14) Then He went near the casket and touched it; [immediately] the pallbearers stopped. Jesus said, "Young man, I tell you, get up." 15) And the dead man sat up and began talking. And Jesus gave him [back] to his mother [alive].

16) Then everyone was gripped with fear and gave honor to God, saying, "[Surely] a great prophet has arisen among us and God's [presence] has come to His people." 17) And the report of this [incident] about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the entire surrounding district.

18) Then the disciples of John [the Immerser] told him all about these things [i.e., what Jesus was doing]. 19) So, John called to him two of his disciples and sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the One who was to come, or should we look for someone else?" 20) And when these men came to Jesus they said, "John the Immerser has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the One who was to come, or should we look for someone else?'"

21) At that very time Jesus was healing many people from diseases, those plagued with serious illnesses and those dominated by

evil spirits. He [also] restored sight to many blind people. 22) So, Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard; [how] blind people are receiving back their sight, and crippled people are walking [again], and people with infectious skin diseases are being healed, and deaf-mutes are hearing [and speaking (?) again], and people are being raised [from the dead], and poor people are having the good news preached to them. 23) The person who does not find an occasion for having doubts about my identity is fortunate indeed."

24) And when the messengers sent by John left, Jesus began saying to the crowds about John, "What did you expect to see when you went out into the desert? A tall stem swaying in the wind? 25) What did you expect to see? A man dressed in fancy clothes? Look, people who wear elaborate outfits and bask in luxury live in kings' palaces. 26) But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I will say [he is], and much more than a prophet. 27) He is the one about whom it was written [Mal. 3:1], 'Look, I [will] send my messenger on ahead of you. He will prepare the pathway in front of you.' 28) And I tell you, among [all] those born of women, there is no one greater than John [the Immerser], yet the least significant person in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

29) And when all the people, together with the tax collectors, heard this they praised God for being so just, and were immersed with the immersion [preached] by John. 30) But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law of Moses, who would not be immersed by John, rejected God's purpose for themselves.

31) "What then should I compare the people of this generation with?" [Jesus asked]. "And what are they like? 32) They are like children sitting in the open shopping market, calling to one another, saying, 'We [pretended we] were making music [at a wedding] but you did not dance; we [pretended we] were wailing [at a funeral] but you did not cry [along with us].' 33) For when John the Immerser came, he did not eat bread or drink wine [on festive occasions] and you said, 'He is dominated by an evil spirit.' 34) [Then] the Son of man came eating and drinking [at festive occasions] and you said, 'Look, he is a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and worldly people.' 35) It proves that [God's] wise counsel is right in the eyes of all of her children [i.e., in the eyes of people known for their wisdom]."

36) Then one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have a meal with him. So, He went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the [dinner] table. [Note: Matt. 23:6]. **37)** And when a sinful woman from the town learned that He was having dinner at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster [i.e., stone] jar of liquid perfume, **38)** and stood behind Jesus, at His feet, crying. She began wetting His feet with her tears and wiping them dry with the hair of her head. Then she kissed His feet and poured the perfume on them.

39) Now when the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who touched him and what kind of a woman she was---a sinner." **40)** Then Jesus said to him, "Simon [See verse 43], I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Teacher, [go ahead and] say it." **41)** [Jesus then gave this parable]: A certain moneylender had two men who owed him money; one owed him five hundred coins [Note: The total amount was 500 days of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$35,000 in 1994], and the other man [owed him] fifty coins [Note: About \$3,500 in 1994]. **42)** When these two men did not have [the money] to repay him, the moneylender canceled [the debts of] both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" **43)** Simon answered, "The one who had the largest debt canceled, I suppose." Jesus said to him, "You are right." **44)** Then Jesus turned to the woman [who had just poured the perfume on Him] and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house and you did not give me any water for [washing] my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them dry with her hair. **45)** You did not give me a kiss [of greeting], but from the time I came in [to your house] she has not stopped kissing my feet. **46)** You did not pour [aromatic] oil on my head, but she poured perfume on my feet. **47)** For this reason, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven, for she has loved much. [Note: This suggests that her forgiveness was the result of her loving, but the point Jesus makes better fits the idea that her forgiveness produced love]. But the person who is forgiven of little [i.e., of only a few sins], loves [only] a little bit." **48)** Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven." **49)** And those who were reclining at the [dinner] table with Him began saying among themselves, "Who is this person who can even forgive sins?" **50)** Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you [i.e., from condemnation]. Go [away] in peace."

CHAPTER EIGHT

1) And it happened soon after this that Jesus went through one town and village after another, preaching and proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God. [Traveling] with Him were the twelve apostles 2) and certain women who had been healed from [domination by] evil spirits and diseases. [These women were] Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven evil spirits had been driven out, 3) and Joanna, the wife of Chuzas, Herod's property manager, and Susanna and many others. These [all] had provided the material support for the group from their own means.

4) Then when a large crowd assembled and people from every town were coming to Jesus, He told them this parable [i.e., a brief story to illustrate His teaching]: 5) A farmer went out [to his field] to plant grain. And as he sowed [i.e., scattering seeds by hand], some of it landed along side of the road; it was stepped on by people and [eventually] birds of the sky came and ate it. 6) And other [seed] fell on rocky ground and as soon as it started to grow, it [quickly] withered away, because it had no moisture. 7) And other [seed] fell among thorns, which grew up with it and [eventually] choked out [the tender sprouts]. 8) And [still] other [seed] fell into fertile soil; it grew and produced a crop of one hundred times [as much as was planted]. As He said these things, He called out, "The person who has ears to hear with ought to listen [to this] carefully."

9) Then Jesus' disciples asked Him what this parable meant. 10) And He said to them, "You [disciples] are being given an understanding of the secrets of the kingdom of God, but the rest of the people [are being told] in parables, so that [even though they appear to be] seeing, they will not [actually] see; and [even though they seem to] hear, they will not understand. 11) Now [the meaning of] the parable is this: The seed represents the word of God. 12) And those people [represented by the seed falling] along side of the road are those who have heard the word [of God], but the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they do not believe it and receive salvation. 13) And those people [represented by the seed falling] on rocky ground are those who, upon hearing the word [of God], accept it gladly, but since they have no root [system], they believe it for [only] awhile, and [then] in times of trial fall away

[from God]. **14)** And those people [represented by the seed] that fell among thorns are the ones who have heard [the word], and as they go about their business, they become choked by worry, by money and by worldly pleasures, and produce no mature crop. **15)** And those people [represented by seed falling] in the fertile soil are those who possess a good and honest heart when they hear the word [of God]. They hold on to it and patiently [continue until they] produce a crop.

16) And no one lights an [olive oil] lamp and then covers it with a basket or puts it under a bed. But he places it on a stand so that those entering [the house] will see [by] the light. **17)** For there is nothing done in obscurity that will not be made known [openly], and nothing done secretly that will not [eventually] become known and be revealed. **18)** Pay attention to how you listen, for to the person who [already] has something, [more] will be given, but from the person who has [virtually] nothing, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him."

19) Then Jesus' mother and [half-] brothers came to Him, but they could not get near Him because of the [large] crowd. **20)** And it was told to Him [by someone], "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside wanting to see you." **21)** But He replied to them, "My mother and my brothers are those people who hear God's word and obey it."

22) Now it happened on one of those days that Jesus entered a boat with His disciples. He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side" [i.e., the east side of Lake Galilee]; so they launched out. **23)** But while they were sailing, Jesus fell asleep. A windstorm blew down on the lake and [the boat] began filling with water so they were in great danger [of sinking]. **24)** The disciples approached Jesus and woke Him, shouting, "Master, Master, we are sinking." And He woke up and spoke sternly to the wind and the raging water; [then] the storm [immediately] stopped and [everything] became calm. **25)** Then He said to the disciples, "Where is your faith?" They became afraid and were amazed, saying to one another, "Who can this [man] be, that he can even command the winds and the water and they obey him?"

26) [Finally] they arrived at the district of the Gerasenes, which is opposite [i.e., across the lake from the province of] Galilee. [Note: Matt. 8:28 says 'Gadara.' Geresia and Gadara were two towns about twelve miles apart in the same region east of Lake Galilee]. **27)** And when He stepped out [of the boat] onto the shore, He was met by a certain man from the town,

who was dominated by evil spirits. He had not worn any clothes for a long time and lived in the graveyard instead of a house. **28)** And when he saw Jesus, he fell at His feet [i.e., in worship. See Mark 5:6] and shouted out with a loud voice saying, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Highest God? I beg you, do not torture me." **29)** For Jesus was commanding the evil spirits to be driven out of the man, because they had been controlling him for a long time. The man was continually being guarded and his hands and feet were bound with chains. [Sometimes] he broke loose from the chains and was driven into the desert by the evil spirits. **30)** Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, "[My name is] 'Legion'" [Note: This word means a number consisting of between 5,000 and 6,000], for many evil spirits had entered the man. **31)** And the evil spirits begged Jesus not to require them to go away into the "pit" [Note: This appears to be the place reserved for the devil and his evil spirits. See Rev. 9:1-11; 20:1-3]. **32)** Now a herd of many [wild?] hogs was grazing on a [nearby] mountain, so the evil spirits begged Jesus to give them permission to enter [the bodies of] the hogs. So, He gave them permission [to do it]. **33)** Then the evil spirits went out of the man and entered the hogs. The herd [immediately] rushed down the cliff into the lake and was drowned. **34)** And when those who had been grazing the hogs saw what had happened, they ran and told it in the town and [around] the country. **35)** People went out to see [i.e., to find out] what had happened. And [when] they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the evil spirits had been driven out sitting down at Jesus' feet with his clothes on and perfectly sane, they were afraid. **36)** Those who saw this told others how the man dominated by evil spirits was restored. **37)** Then all the people around the district of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave their area because they were gripped with great fear. So, He entered a boat and returned. **38)** But the man from whom the evil spirits had been driven out begged Jesus to allow him to travel with Him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, **39)** "Return to your house and tell people about the great things God has done for you." So, he went on his way, proclaiming throughout the whole town [i.e., Gerasa. See verse 26] the great things Jesus had done for him.

40) Then as Jesus returned [i.e., to the northwest shore of the lake, probably to the vicinity of Capernaum], a crowd was waiting for Him and welcomed Him. **41)** And just then an official of the [Jewish] synagogue named Jairus came to Him and fell at His feet [i.e.,

worshiping. See Matt. 9:18] and begged Him to go to his house, 42) for the official's only daughter, who was about twelve years old, was dying.

As Jesus was going, large crowds pressed in on Him. 43) Then a woman, who had been bleeding for twelve years, and who had spent all her income on doctors without being healed by any of them, 44) came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of His robe. Immediately her bleeding stopped. 45) Jesus said, "Who touched me?" And when everyone denied [doing it], Peter and the disciples said,, "Master, many people are pressing in on you and crowding you." 46) But Jesus replied, "Someone did touch me, for I perceived that [healing] power had gone out from me." 47) And when the woman realized that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling [with fear] and fell down in front of Him, declaring before all the people why she had touched Him and how she had been immediately healed. 48) Then Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

49) While He was still speaking, someone came from the synagogue official's house, saying [to him], "Your daughter is dead; do not bother the Teacher." 50) But when Jesus heard this, He said [to the man], "Do not be afraid. Just believe [i.e., in my power to restore your daughter] and she will be made well [i.e., restored to life]."

51) And when Jesus came to the [synagogue official's] house, He did not allow anyone to enter with Him except Peter, James, John and the girl's father and mother. 52) And all the people [in the house] were crying and beating their chests in mourning, so Jesus said [to them], "Do not cry, for the girl is not [really] dead but [only] sleeping." 53) And they laughed at Him scornfully, knowing that she was [already] dead. 54) But taking her by the hand, He called to her, saying, "Child, get up." 55) And immediately her spirit returned and she stood up. Then Jesus ordered them to give her something to eat. 56) Her parents were amazed, but Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

CHAPTER NINE

1) Jesus then called the twelve apostles together and gave them power and authority over all evil spirits and [the ability] to heal

diseases. 2) And He sent them out to preach the [coming] kingdom of God and to heal sick people. 3) He said to them, "Do not take anything with you during your travels; not [even] a walking stick [Note: By comparing this and the restriction in Matt. 10:10, with the permission given in Mark 6:8, the harmony seems to be "if you do not already have a walking stick, do not get one"], or a traveling bag [for personal belongings], or food, or money, or [even] two coats [Note: Mark 6:9 says, "take only one coat" confirming the idea that Jesus was saying, in effect, "do not take anything extra, go just as you are"]. 4) And whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that place. 5) And those people who do not welcome you, shake the dust off of your shoes as evidence against them." [Note: This was a Jewish custom showing disdain, and intended to suggest their unworthiness]. 6) So, they left and went throughout the villages preaching the good news and healing people everywhere.

7) Now when King Herod, the tetrarch [i.e., governor of that district] heard about all that was happening [concerning Jesus], he was perplexed because some people were saying that John [the Immerser] had risen from the dead; 8) some [were saying] that [the prophet] Elijah had appeared; and [still] others [were saying] that one of the [other] prophets of old had risen again [from the dead]. 9) Then Herod said, "I had John decapitated, so who is this person about whom I hear such things?" And he became eager to see Jesus.

10) When the apostles returned they told Jesus what they had done. Then Jesus took them and went away privately to a town called Bethsaida. [Note: This town was on the east side of Lake Galilee, and apparently was a different "Bethsaida" from the one mentioned in Mark 6:45]. 11) But the crowds found out about it [i.e., where Jesus had gone], so they followed Him [there]. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the [coming] kingdom of God and cured those who needed healing.

12) Then late in the day the twelve apostles came and said to Jesus, "Send the crowd away so they can go into the villages and the surrounding countryside to find lodging and food because this place is deserted." 13) But He said to the apostles, "You men give them something to eat." But they replied, "We have only five loaves of [barley] bread [See John 6:9] and two [probably smoked] fish, unless we go and buy [more] food for all these people." 14) For there were about five thousand men [there]. So, He said to His disciples, "Have these people recline [on the grass. See Matt. 14:19] in groups of about fifty each." 15) So, the disciples did this, and had all the people

recline [on the grass in groups]. 16) Then Jesus took the five loaves of bread and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, asked God's blessing on the food. [Then] He broke it [in pieces] and gave it to the disciples to distribute to the crowds. 17) They all ate until they were full, then gathered up twelve baskets [full] of the remaining broken pieces.

18) And it happened while Jesus was praying off by Himself that His disciples joined Him. He asked them, saying, "Who are the crowds saying that I am?" 19) And they answered, "[Some say you are] John the Immerser, while others say [the prophet] Elijah, and [still others say] that one of the [other] prophets of old has risen again [from the dead]." 20) Then Jesus said to them, "But who do you men say that I am?" And Peter answered, "[You are] the Christ of God [i.e., God's specially chosen one]." 21) Then He sternly ordered them not to tell this to anyone, 22) saying, "The Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the [Jewish] elders, leading priests and experts in the law of Moses. Then He will be killed and [yet] be raised up on the third day."

23) Then He said to everyone, "If anyone wants to be my follower, he should deny self [i.e., of always having its own way] and accept his cross [i.e., his responsibilities, with all their difficulties] everyday, and [then he can] become my follower. 24) For whoever would [try to] save his life [i.e., by neglecting spiritual things] will lose it [i.e., miss out on the blessings of God]. But whoever [willingly] loses his life [i.e., in commitment to God's service] for my sake, that person will save it [i.e., obtain both temporal and spiritual blessings]. 25) For what is a person benefited if he gains the whole world [i.e., of material things] and [yet] loses [his spiritual life] or gives himself up [to spiritual ruin]? 26) For whoever will be ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of man will [also] be ashamed of him when He returns in His own splendor and that of the Father and of the holy angels. 27) But I tell you the truth, there are some people standing here who will surely not experience death until they see that God's kingdom has come [i.e., in a demonstration of power. See Mark 9:1]."

28) And it happened about eight days after Jesus said these things that He took Peter, John and James with Him and went up in the mountain to pray. [Note: This was probably Mt. Tabor, which was nearby]. 29) And as He was praying, the appearance of His face was

[miraculously] changed and His clothing became dazzling white. **30)** Then suddenly two men were [seen] talking with Jesus. They were Moses and Elijah, **31)** who appeared in splendor, and were speaking of Jesus' [coming] departure [i.e., His imminent death], which He was soon to experience at Jerusalem. **32)** Now Peter and those with him [i.e., James and John] had been very sleepy, but became wide awake when they saw the splendor of Jesus and the two men standing with Him. **33)** And it happened, as the two men were leaving Him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is [so] good for us to be here. Let us make three [small] shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." [But] he did not realize what he was saying. [See note at Matt. 17:4].

34) And while he was speaking, a cloud appeared and engulfed them and the apostles were afraid as Moses and Elijah entered the cloud [i.e., and disappeared]. **35)** Then a voice spoke out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, [whom] I have chosen; listen to Him." **36)** And after the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. But the apostles kept quiet [about this incident], and did not tell anyone at that time about anything they had seen.

37) And it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a large crowd met Jesus. **38)** Just then a man from the crowd shouted out, "Teacher, I beg you, look at my son [i.e., favorably], for he is my only child. **39)** For when an evil spirit takes hold of him he suddenly screams and [then] it throws him into convulsions so that he foams [at the mouth]. And it does not want to leave him, [even after] severely bruising him. **40)** And I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not." **41)** And Jesus replied, saying, "You perverse generation of faithless people! How long must I be [patient] with you, and put up with you [i.e., before you understand]? Bring your son here." **42)** And while the boy was approaching [Jesus], an evil spirit threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus spoke sternly to the evil spirit and [then] returned him to his father healed. **43)** And everyone was amazed at [seeing] the greatness of God.

But while they were all amazed at everything Jesus was doing, He said to His disciples, **44)** "Pay close attention to what I am saying, for the Son of man will be handed over to [evil] men." **45)** But they did not understand what He was talking about, for it was hidden from them, so that they would not understand its meaning.

And they were afraid to ask Him about what He had said.

46) Then a dispute developed among Jesus' disciples as to which one of them was the greatest. **47)** When Jesus knew what they were disputing about in their minds, He took a small child and placed him at His side, **48)** and said to the disciples, "The person who welcomes this little child in my name [i.e., because he belongs to me], welcomes me [also]. And the person who welcomes me [i.e., into his life?] welcomes God, who sent me. For that person who is the least [significant] among you men is the one who is the greatest [in importance]."

49) Then [the apostle] John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone driving out evil spirits by [using] your name, so we told him not to, because he was not following [you] with us." **50)** But Jesus said to him, "Do not try to stop him, for the person who is not against you is for you."

51) And it happened when the time came for Jesus to be taken up [to heaven] that He firmly determined to go to Jerusalem. **52)** So, He sent messengers on ahead of Him, who went and entered a Samaritan village to prepare for Him [i.e., for His food and lodging]. **53)** And these Samaritans did not welcome Him because He was heading for Jerusalem. [Note: They perceived He was a Jew and Samaritans did not associate with Jews]. **54)** And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said [to Him], "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to burn them up?" **55)** But He turned to them and spoke sternly. { {Some manuscripts add "You do not know what kind of a spirit you represent, **56)** for the Son of man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them" } } So, they went to another village.

57) And as they were going along the road, a certain man [i.e., an expert in the law of Moses. See Matt. 8:19] said to Him, "I will follow you wherever you go." **58)** Jesus replied to him, "The foxes have dens [in which to live] and the birds of the sky have nests [in which to roost], but the Son of man does not have anywhere to lay His head." **59)** And [then] He said to another person, "Become my follower." But he replied, "Lord, allow me to go and bury my father first." **60)** But Jesus replied to him, "Let the [spiritually] dead bury their own dead [i.e., let them care for their family members until they die], but you go and proclaim the [coming] kingdom of God." **61)** Then another person said [to Jesus], "Lord, I will become your follower, but first let me say goodbye to my family." [Note: There was the

likelihood that family members might try to dissuade him from his commitment to follow the Lord]. 62) But Jesus said to him, "Nobody who begins plowing [a field] and then looks back [i.e., in regret for beginning such an arduous task] is suited for [serving in] the kingdom of God."

CHAPTER TEN

1) Now after these things [happened] the Lord appointed seventy-two other disciples [Note: Some ancient manuscripts say "seventy." This group would have been in addition to the twelve. See Luke 9:1], and sent them two by two on ahead of Him into every town and locality that He planned to visit. 2) And He said to them, "There is certainly plenty to harvest, but there are [too] few people to do the work. You should pray to the Lord of the harvest to send [more] workers out into the field to gather His crop. 3) [So], go on; See, I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. 4) Do not carry a money belt, or a traveling bag [for personal belongings] or shoes; and do not extend [elaborate] greetings to anyone along the way. 5) And whatever house you enter, first say, 'Let peace be upon this household.' 6) And if a son of peace is there [i.e., a peace-loving person], your [request for] peace will rest upon him. But if he is not [a peace-loving person], your [blessing of] peace will return to [rest on] you. 7) And you should remain in that same house [i.e., the peace-loving one], eating and drinking whatever they serve you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move from house to house [i.e., wasting time]. 8) And into whatever town you enter and are welcomed, eat whatever is placed in front of you, 9) and heal the sick people who live there. Say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' 10) But whatever town you enter that does not welcome you, go out into its streets and say [to them], 11) 'We are wiping off even the dust of your city that has stuck to our feet [in protest] against you. Yet you should know this, that the kingdom of God has come near [to you].' 12) I tell you, the people of Sodom will be shown more leniency on that day [i.e., the day of judgment] than that town will receive.

13) "It is too bad for you, Chorazin! It is too bad for you, Bethsaida! For if the powerful miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which were performed in your presence, they would have repented long ago by sitting in ashes and wearing sackcloth. [Note: This sackcloth was a coarse cloth made of goat hair and indicated deep remorse or mourning]. 14)

But Tyre and Sidon will be shown more leniency in the judgment [day] than you will. 15) And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up [as high] as heaven? [Certainly not], you will be brought down to the unseen place of departed spirits [i.e., you will become obscure or obliterated as a city]. 16) The person who listens to you, [actually] listens to me. And the person who rejects you, [actually] rejects me. And the person who rejects me, [actually] rejects Him who sent me [i.e., God]."

17) So, the seventy-two disciples returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the evil spirits submitted to us in your name [i.e., by your authority]." 18) And Jesus said to them, "I saw Satan falling from heaven as lightning. 19) See, I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions [i.e., to receive protection from accidental contact with venomous creatures. See Acts 28:5] and [to have authority] over all the power of the enemy [i.e., Satan. See verse 18]. And nothing at all will hurt you. 20) Nevertheless, do not rejoice over the [evil] spirits submitting to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven [i.e., in the book of life. See Rev. 3:5; Heb. 12:23]."

21) At that very time Jesus rejoiced in [the power of] the Holy Spirit, and said [in prayer], "I praise you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you concealed these things [i.e., His divine revelations] from those [claiming to be] wise and intelligent and have revealed them to babies [i.e., to simple, sincere, common people]. Yes, Father, this was pleasing to you. 22) Everything has been handed over to me by my Father and no one knows the Son except the Father. And [no one knows] the Father except the Son and whatever person the Son wants to reveal Him to."

23) Then Jesus turned to the disciples and said privately, "The eyes that see the things you see are [truly] blessed, 24) for I tell you, many prophets and kings wanted to see the things that you see, but did not [get to] see them. And [they wanted] to hear the things that you hear, but did not [get to] hear them."

25) Just then a certain teacher of the law of Moses stood up and [attempted to] test Jesus, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit [never ending] life?" 26) And Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law of Moses? How do you read it?" 27) And the man answered Him, [Deut. 6:5], "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all

your mind." And [Lev. 19:18 says], "[You must love] your neighbor just as [you love] yourself." 28) Then Jesus said to him, "You have answered correctly; [if] you do this, you will live" [i.e., forever. See verse 25]. 29) But, wanting to justify himself, the teacher of the law of Moses asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30) Jesus answered him, "A certain man was traveling down from Jerusalem to Jericho [Note: This was a town about eighteen miles northeast of Jerusalem], when he was attacked by robbers, who stripped him [of his clothing and belongings] and beat him up, then went away leaving him half dead. 31) And it just happened that a certain priest was traveling down that [same] road, and when he saw the [injured] man, he went around him on the opposite side of the road. 32) In the same way, a Levite [Note: Levites were assistants to the priests], when coming to that place and seeing the [injured] man, also went around him on the opposite side [of the road]. 33) But [then] a certain Samaritan [Note: This was a person despised by the Jews and regarded by them as a 'half-breed'], as he traveled along, came to where the [injured] man was [lying], and upon seeing him [lying there], felt deep pity [for him]. 34) So, he went over to him, poured oil and wine on him [i.e., as emergency medical treatment], then bandaged his wounds, placed him on his own animal, and took him to a lodge where he took care of him. 35) Then the next day he gave the lodgekeeper two coins [Note: These coins amounted to two days of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$140 in 1994] and told him, 'Take care of this [injured] man; and whatever more you have to spend on him I will repay you when I come back [this way] again.' 36) [Now] which of these three men do you think acted like a neighbor to the man attacked by the robbers?" 37) And the teacher of the law of Moses said, "The person who showed pity on him." Then Jesus replied, "You go and do the same thing."

38) Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a certain village [i.e., Bethany. See John 11:1], and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39) And she had a sister named Mary who was also sitting at the Lord's feet, listening to what He said. 40) But Martha was preoccupied with all the preparations [i.e., for entertaining her beloved guest] and came up to Jesus and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Ask her to help me." 41) But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about [so] many things. 42) But only one thing is [really] needful. For Mary has made

the better choice, which will not be taken away from her."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) And it happened as Jesus finished praying at a certain place that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us [how] to pray, just like John [the Immerser] taught his disciples."

2) And He said to them, "When you pray you should say, 'Father, may your name be highly honored. May your kingdom come [to earth]. 3) Give us day by day our bread for each day. 4) And forgive us of our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who has wronged us. And do not allow us to be put to the test.'"

5) And Jesus said to His disciples, "Suppose one of you who has a friend would go to him at midnight and say to him, '[Please] lend me three loaves of bread, 6) for a friend of mine has come to [visit] me while on a trip and I do not have anything to feed him?' 7) Then the man will answer from inside [his house], 'Do not bother me. My door is [already] locked, my children are [already] in bed with me and I cannot get up to give you anything.' 8) I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him something because he is a friend, yet because of his friend's persistence, he will [eventually] get up and give him whatever he needs. 9) And I tell you, ask [God for something] and it will be given to you; look [to God for something] and you will find it; knock [on the door of opportunity] and it will be opened up to you. 10) For every person who asks will [certainly] receive; and the one who looks will [certainly] find; and to the person who knocks, the door will [certainly] be opened up. 11) And what father among you, whose son asks [him] { {Some ancient manuscripts add "for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone [instead]? Or [if he asks]" } } for a fish, will give him a snake [instead]? 12) Or if he asks [him] for an egg, will give him a scorpion [instead]? [Note: While at rest a scorpion rolls up in a ball that resembles an egg]. 13) If then you know how to give good gifts to your children, even though you are sinful [human beings], how much more [likely] is it that your Father in heaven will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

14) [Once] Jesus was driving out an evil spirit from a [man who was] mute. And it happened when the evil spirit left [him] that the [former] mute began to speak. And the crowds were amazed. 15)

But some of the people said, "He is driving out evil spirits by [the power of] Beelzebub, the chief of evil spirits." **16)** Then others, trying to test Him, asked Him to perform a [supernatural] sign from heaven.

17) But, knowing their thoughts, Jesus said to them, "Every kingdom [plagued] with internal division will end in ruin. And a household divided from within will fall. **18)** And if Satan also is divided against himself, how [then] can his kingdom stand? I tell you this because you are saying that I drove out evil spirits by [the power of] Beelzebub. **19)** But, if I drive out evil spirits by [the power of] Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out? So, they will be your judges. **20)** But, if I drive out evil spirits by the finger of God [i.e., by God's direct, supernatural intervention], then [that is evidence that] the kingdom of God has come into your midst [i.e., by my presence and ministry]. **21)** When a fully armed strong man guards his own courtyard [i.e., homestead], his possessions are safe. **22)** But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away all the armament the strong man relied on, and [then] divides up his storehouse of possessions. [Note: The word here translated "possessions" may be translated "arms" so the meaning could be "divides up his armament"]. **23)** The person who is not on my side is [actually] against me. And the person who does not gather [people to me] is [actually] driving them away [from me].

24) "When an evil spirit has been driven out of a man, it roams through desert regions trying to find rest, but [when it] cannot find any, it says [to itself], 'I will return to my house from which I came [i.e., the body of the person it dominated].' **25)** But when it returns [to that body] it finds it cleaned out and [newly] decorated. **26)** Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits, more evil than itself, and they reenter [the body] and [begin] to live there, so that the latter state of that person becomes worse than the former state."

27) And it happened as He said these things that a certain woman called out to Him from the crowd, saying, "The woman who gave you birth and nursed you is [certainly] blessed." **28)** But Jesus said, "Yes, but those who listen to God's message and obey it are [more] blessed."

29) And when the crowds thronged around Jesus, He began saying, "This generation of people is evil, [for] it is looking for a [supernatural] sign. But no [such] sign will be given to it except the sign [demonstrated in the life] of Jonah. **30)** For just like Jonah

became a sign to the people of Nineveh [Note: Nineveh was the capital of ancient Assyria], so the Son of man will also be [a sign] to this generation of people. **31)** The queen of the South [Note: This queen was from Sheba, which was probably in Arabia. See I Kings 10:1], will stand up on the judgment day, along with the people of this generation, and will condemn them because she came from a great distance to hear [and see] Solomon's wisdom [I Kings 10:1ff] and [now] Someone greater than Solomon is here [i.e., Jesus]. **32)** The people of Nineveh will stand up on the judgment day with the people of this generation and will condemn them because they repented [i.e., changed their hearts and lives] when hearing the preaching of Jonah [Jonah 3:5-10] and [now] Someone greater than Jonah is here [i.e., Jesus].

33) "No one lights an [olive oil] lamp and [then] places it in a hidden place or under a bushel-sized container, but on its stand, so that those who enter [the room] can see [by] the light. **34)** Your eye is [like] a lamp to your body [i.e., your life]. When your eye sees things correctly, [then] your whole body [i.e., your entire life] is illuminated [i.e., directed into proper conduct]. But when it sees things wrongly, [then] your body [i.e., your life] is also full of darkness [i.e., is not being lived properly]. **35)** Look therefore [to see] whether or not the light that is in you [i.e., your perspective on things] might [actually] be darkness [i.e., a distorted perspective]. **36)** If therefore your whole body [i.e., your entire life] is full of light [i.e., sees and responds to things correctly], with no blind spots [i.e., areas where you do not see and act correctly], your body [i.e., your life] will be fully illuminated [i.e., directed into proper conduct] just like a bright, shining lamp illuminating you [i.e., enabling you to see and respond to things properly]."

37) Now while Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee [i.e., a strict sect of the Jewish religion] invited Him to have a meal with him. So, Jesus went in [to his house] and reclined [at the dinner table]. [Note: See Matt. 23:6]. **38)** And when the Pharisee observed this, he was surprised that Jesus had not first washed himself ceremonially before the meal. **39)** And the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees [meticulously] clean the outside of the cup and the dish [i.e., this was an allusion to their lives], but you are filled with greed for wealth and [other] evils on the inside. **40)** You foolish people! Did not the One [i.e., God] who made the outside [i.e., your body] also make the inside [i.e., your spirit]? **41)** But you should give to poor people what you have inside.

[Note: This means either what is inside the *dish*, or what is inside your *heart*]. And [then] you will see that everything is [ceremonially] clean to you [as well].

42) "But it is too bad for you Pharisees! For you give a tenth of your mint, rue and every [other] herb [Note: These were small garden plants used for seasoning or medicine] and [yet] neglect [demonstrating] justice and the love of God [toward others]. But you should have done these things and not neglected to do the other things [as well].

43) "It is too bad for you Pharisees! For you love [to occupy] the principal seats in the synagogues and [to receive special] greetings in the open shopping markets.

44) "It is too bad for you! For you people are like obscure grave sites that people walk over without knowing it."

45) Then one of the teachers of the law of Moses answered Jesus, saying, "Teacher, you insulted us too by saying this."

46) And He replied them, "It is too bad for you teachers of the law of Moses also! For you heap heavy responsibilities on people, which are difficult to bear, while you do not even lift a finger to bear them yourselves.

47) "It is too bad for you! For your forefathers killed the prophets and you build grave monuments to them [i.e., the prophets].

48) So, [by doing this] you are witnesses [against yourselves] that you approve of the deeds of your forefathers, for they killed the prophets and you build grave monuments to them. **49)** Therefore, the wisdom of God said, [Note: Is this a reference to Jesus? See I Cor. 1:30 and Matt. 23:34-36], 'I will send prophets and apostles to them [i.e., the Jewish people] and they will kill and persecute some of them, **50)** so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the beginning of the world, may be required of this generation of people.' **51)** Yes, I tell you, this generation will be punished [for the death of the prophets], from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zachariah, who died between the Altar and the sanctuary [i.e., in the Temple area]. [Note: This punishment began about 37 years later in the war with the Romans, when Jerusalem was destroyed].

52) "It is too bad for you teachers of the law of Moses! For you took away the key of knowledge [i.e., preventing people from understanding God's plan]. You did not enter [the kingdom of heaven. See Matt. 23:13] yourselves and [you even] prevented those who [wanted] to enter [to get in]."

53) And when Jesus left there [i.e., probably the Pharisee's house. See verse 37], the experts in the law of Moses and the

Pharisees began opposing Him with hostility and bombarding Him with many questions, 54) [and] plotting to trap Him by something He might say.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1) About this time, while a crowd of many thousands had assembled, [so large that] people were trampling on one another, Jesus first began telling His disciples, "Watch out for the leavening [effect] of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2) But there is nothing [they do that will remain] covered up; it will [all] be exposed. [And there is] nothing done secretly that will not be made known [openly]. 3) Therefore, whatever you have said in the darkness [i.e., in obscurity] will be heard in the light [i.e., openly]. And what you have whispered in someone's ear in a back room, will be declared from the housetops. 4) "And I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who can kill your body and after that can do nothing more. 5) But I am warning you about whom you should fear. Fear the One [i.e., God] who, after He has killed [i.e., the body], has power to throw [you] into hell [See note on Matt. 5:29]. Yes, I tell you, fear Him. 6) Are not five sparrows sold [i.e., in the market as food] for two coins? [Note: The coins here amount to just over one hour's worth of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$8 in 1994]. Yet in the presence of God, not a [single] one of them is forgotten. 7) [God even knows] the number of hairs on your head [Note: The average full head of hair has approximately 25,000 hairs]. [So], do not be afraid, for you are [much] more valuable than many sparrows.

8) "And I tell you, every person who acknowledges me in front of people [i.e., to be his Lord and Christ], the Son of man will also acknowledge him in front of God's angels. 9) But that person who disowns me in front of people [i.e., denies that I am the Christ, or that he is a disciple. See John 18:15-17, 25-27], will be disowned in front of God's angels. 10) And every person who speaks an [abusive] word against the Son of man will be forgiven of it, but the person who speaks abusive words against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven of it. 11) And when people bring you in front of synagogue assemblies and rulers and authorities [i.e., for judgment], do not worry about how to speak or what you should say. 12) For the Holy Spirit will teach you what you should say at that very time."

13) Then someone out of the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher,

tell my brother to divide the [family] inheritance with me." 14) But He said to him, "Man, who appointed me to judge or [decide on how] to divide [the property] between you two?" 15) And [then] He said to them, "Be careful and guard yourselves against [practicing] all forms of greed, for a person's life does not consist of having a lot of possessions."

16) And He told them a parable [i.e., a brief story to illustrate His teaching], saying, "The land of a certain rich man produced a bumper crop, 17) so he thought to himself, 'What should I do, because I do not have any [more] room to store my crops?' 18) Then he said [to himself], 'This is what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build larger [ones]; then I will store all my grain and [other] goods there [i.e., farm supplies]. 19) And I will say to myself, 'Soul, you have plenty of goods [i.e., grain and supplies] stored up for many years, [so], take it easy; eat, drink and have fun.' 20) But God said to him, 'You fool! Tonight your life will be taken away from you. And [then] who will get the things you have stored up [for yourself]?' 21) This is [the way it will be with] the person who stores up treasures for himself, and [yet] is not rich toward God [i.e., does place enough importance on spiritual things]."

22) Then Jesus said to His disciples, "So, I tell you, do not worry about [the material things of] your life, [such as] what you will eat or what you will wear on your body. 23) For there are more important things in life than food, and [more important things about] your body than the clothing [you wear]. 24) Look at the ravens; they do not plant seeds or harvest [a crop]; they do not have a storage locker or a barn, and [yet] God feeds them [adequately]. Are you not a lot more valuable than those birds? 25) And which one of you can worry yourself into living a single day longer? 26) So, if you are not able to do even a little thing like that, why are you worrying about the rest?

27) "Consider how [wild] lilies grow; they do not work or weave, yet I tell you, even Solomon, clothed in his very finest royal robes, was never dressed [as luxuriously] as one of these [flowers]. 28) But if God so [beautifully] dresses the grass in a field, which is [green] today, and [then] tomorrow [dries up and] is thrown into the oven [i.e., as fuel], will He not do even more in providing your clothing, you people with such little faith? 29) So, do not look [anxiously] for what you will eat, and what you will drink, and do not

be [continually] worried [i.e., about such things]. 30) For all these things are what the [unconverted] nations of the world keep trying to get. But your Father [already] knows you need these things. 31) But look for God's kingdom and these things [i.e., food, drink and clothing] will be provided for you.

32) "[So], do not be afraid, little flock [Note: Jesus refers to His small band of disciples as sheep following Him as their Shepherd], for your Father was pleased to give you the kingdom. 33) Sell your possessions and give [the money] to poor people; provide yourselves with money belts that do not wear out [i.e., from the constant use of carrying much money all the time, instead of investing it in others' needs]. [Then you will possess] an inexhaustible treasure in heaven, where no thief can approach, nor moth destroy. 34) For wherever you store your valuables, that is where your heart [i.e., your real concern] will be also.

35) "Fasten your belts [i.e., get things ready], keep your lamps lit, 36) and be like men expecting their master to return from the wedding reception, so that when he does come and knock [at the groom's house, See note on Matt. 25:1-12], they will immediately open [the door] to him. 37) Those slaves whom their master finds being watchful when he returns are [certainly] blessed. Truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt [i.e., get things ready] and have them recline [at his dinner table] and will come and serve them. 38) And if he comes between nine o'clock and midnight or between midnight and three o'clock in the morning and finds them being watchful, those slaves will be blessed [for doing so]. 39) But you should realize this, if the owner of the house had known exactly when the burglar was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 40) So, you also should be ready, for the Son of man will return at a time when you least expect Him."

41) Then Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for our benefit [only] or for all people?" 42) And the Lord answered, "Who then is the trustworthy and sensible property manager, to whom his master will assign the management of his household, to provide adequate and timely meals for its members? 43) That servant will be happy when his master returns to find him doing [his job] well. 44) Truly I tell you, he will put that slave in charge of his entire estate. 45) But if that slave should think to himself, 'My master will not be back soon,' and then becomes physically abusive to his men

and women servants, and eats and drinks and gets drunk, **46)** that slave's master will return on a day that he least expects, and at an hour unknown [to him]. And [that master] will whip him to shreds and will turn him over to suffer the same fate as unfaithful servants receive. **47)** And that slave who knew what his master wanted, but did not make preparations [i.e., for his master's return], or do what his master wanted, will be whipped with many lashes. **48)** But the one who did not know [i.e., what his master wanted], yet did things deserving of punishment, will be whipped with few lashes. And to the person who has been given much [responsibility], there will be much required [of him]. And to whom people entrust much [responsibility], they will ask [much] more from him.

49) "I have come to bring fire to the earth [Note: This means division within families. See verses 51-53]. And how I wish that fire were already started [i.e., so I could complete my mission sooner]! **50)** But I have an immersion to experience [i.e., overwhelming suffering to undergo. See Mark 10:38-39], and what stress I am under until it happens! **51)** Do you think that I came to bring [only] peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but division instead. **52)** For from now on there will be a household of five persons divided [against one another], three against two and two against three. **53)** And a father will be divided against his son and the son against his father; a mother [will be divided] against her daughter and the daughter against her mother; a mother-in-law [will be divided] against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

54) And Jesus also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'A rainstorm is coming up,' and sure enough, it does. **55)** And when there is a south wind blowing, you say, 'It is going to be a scorching day,' and sure enough, it is. **56)** You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not know how to interpret [events of] this present time?

57) "And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? **58)** And while you are on your way to court with your opponent, make every effort to be reconciled [to him] so that he does not drag you in front of the judge, and then the judge turns you over to the officer, and the officer throws you into prison. **59)** I tell you, you will not be released from there until you have paid the last coin [Note: This coin amounted to about five minutes of a farm laborer's pay, or about fifty cents in 1994]."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) Now there were some there at that very time who told Jesus about some people from Galilee whose blood Pilate [the Roman governor] had mixed with their sacrifices [i.e., he had them murdered while they were offering their sacrifices]. 2) And He answered them, "Do you think those Galileans were worse sinners than all [other] Galileans because they suffered such a fate? 3) No, I tell you; but unless you repent [i.e., change your hearts and lives], you [too] will all be destroyed just as they were. 4) Or do you think that those eighteen persons who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them were worse offenders than all the [other] men who lived in Jerusalem? 5) No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you [too] will all be destroyed just as they were."

6) Then He told them this parable: A certain man had a fig tree [which had been] planted in his orchard. When he came looking for figs on it, he did not find any. 7) So, he said to the orchard worker, "Look, I have been coming [here] looking for figs for three years now, but have not found any. Cut down the tree, [for] why should it waste the space [i.e., by not producing]?" 8) And the orchard worker answered him, "Leave it alone for [just] this year, sir, until I cultivate it and fertilize it. 9) And [then] if it begins to produce, fine; but if it does not, [then] you should cut it down."

10) Now Jesus was teaching in one of the [Jewish] synagogues on the Sabbath day. 11) And just then [He met] a woman who had an [evil] spirit that had caused her to be deformed for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not raise herself up. [Note: This was probably osteomyelitis]. 12) And when Jesus saw her, He called and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your deformed condition." 13) Then He placed His hands on her and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

14) But the official of the synagogue became angry because Jesus had healed [someone] on the Sabbath day. [Note: This was viewed as a violation of proper Sabbath day observance by certain Jews who interpreted the law of Moses with narrow legalism]. So, the official said to the crowd, "There are six days [in the week] for people to work. Therefore, you should come to be healed on one of them, and not on the Sabbath day." 15) But the Lord answered them, "You hypocrites! Does not every one of you untie his ox or his donkey from its stall and lead it to water on the

Sabbath day? **16)** So, should not this woman, being a daughter [i.e., descendant] of Abraham, whom Satan has bound [with this disease] for eighteen years, have been released from this bondage on the Sabbath day?"

17) And as He said these things, all of His enemies felt ashamed [i.e., for objecting to such a noble act], but the whole crowd rejoiced over all the wonderful things He was doing.

18) Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? And what shall I compare it to? **19)** It is similar to a seed from the mustard tree, which a man took and planted in his garden. And it grew and became a [large] tree, and the birds of the sky roosted in its branches."

20) And again He asked, "What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? **21)** It is similar to yeast, which a woman worked into three batches of dough, until the dough was completely permeated [by it]."

22) Then Jesus went through [various] towns and villages, teaching as He traveled on to Jerusalem. **23)** [Along the way] someone asked Him, "Lord, will [only] a few people be saved?" And He answered them, **24)** "You should try hard to enter [God's kingdom] by means of the narrow door, for I tell you, many people will try to enter it but will not be able to. **25)** Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, leaving you standing outside knocking on the door, [and] saying, 'Sir, [please] open [the door] for us.' and he answers you, 'I do not know you or where you came from,' **26)** then you will begin to say, 'We used to eat and drink with you, and you taught in our streets.' **27)** And He will say [i.e., the Lord is represented as saying this in the judgment. See Matt. 7:23; 8:11-12], 'I tell you, I do not know where you came from, [so] go away from me, all you people who have done sinful things.' **28)** [Then] there will be crying and excruciating pain, when you will see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and [you will see] yourselves thrown outside. **29)** And people will come from the east and west and from the north and south to sit down in the kingdom of God. **30)** And certainly, those [who appear to be] last will be first [i.e., in importance and blessings], and those [who appear to be] first will [end up] being last."

31) At that very time certain Pharisees came to Jesus saying, "Get out of here and go someplace else, for King Herod wants to kill

you." 32) And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox [Note: This is a metaphor signifying the sly, cunning nature of King Herod], 'Look, I am driving out evil spirits and performing [miraculous] healings today and tomorrow, but on the third day I will be finished.' 33) Nevertheless, I must continue to travel today and tomorrow and the next day, for it is not possible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.

34) "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you people who murdered the prophets and stoned those who were sent to you! How often I have wanted to gather you people together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 35) Look, your house [i.e., the Jewish Temple] is being abandoned [by me?]. You will not see me until [the time when] you will be saying, 'Praise the One who is coming in the name of the Lord.'"

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1) And it happened on a Sabbath day, when Jesus went to the house of one of the leading Pharisees for a meal, that they [i.e., probably other Pharisees who were also guests] were watching Him closely. 2) And there He saw a certain man suffering from dropsy [Note: This is a condition in which the tissues of the body retain too much fluid]. 3) So, Jesus asked the teachers of the law of Moses and the Pharisees, saying, "Is it permissible by the law of Moses to heal people on the Sabbath day, or not?" 4) But they did not say anything. So, Jesus took hold of the [sick] man, and [after] healing him, sent him away.

5) Then He said to them, "Which one of you, who has a son or an ox that falls into a well, would not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?" 6) And they were not able to give an answer to these things.

7) Then Jesus told a parable to those who had been invited [i.e., the dinner guests at the Pharisee's house. See verse 1], because He noticed how they were choosing places of honor [at the dinner table]. [So], He said to them, 8) "When somebody invites you to a wedding reception, do not recline at the head of the table [Note: See Matt. 23:6], for maybe someone more honorable than you has been invited by the host. 9) Then the one who invited both of you will come [over] and say to you, 'Give this man your seat [at the table],' and then you will be embarrassed and have to move to the least important seat. 10)

But when you are invited [i.e., to a wedding reception], go and recline at the least important seat, so that when the host comes [over to you], he will say, 'Friend, move up to a better seat.' Then you will be shown honor in front of everyone at the dinner table. 11) For every person who exalts himself [as important] will be humbled, but the person who humbles himself will be exalted [as important]."

12) Then Jesus also said to the Pharisee who had invited Him [to dinner], "When you prepare a breakfast or a supper, do not invite your friends, or brothers, or relatives or rich neighbors [only], for maybe they will invite you back, and [then] you will be repaid [for your kindness]. 13) But when you prepare a banquet, invite people who are poor, handicapped, crippled and blind [as well]. 14) Then you will receive a blessing, because these people do not have anything to pay you back with, for you will be paid back when righteous people are raised from the dead."

15) And when one of the people who were reclining at the [dinner] table with Jesus heard this, he said to Him, "The person who will eat bread in the [coming] kingdom of God is [certainly] blessed." 16) But Jesus replied to him, "A certain man prepared a lavish supper and invited many [guests]. 17) When the supper was about ready, he sent his slave out to tell those who were invited, 'Come, for everything is [now] ready.' 18) Then all of them, in the same way, began to excuse themselves [from attending]. The first one said to the host, 'I just bought some land and I need to go out and look it over, so please excuse me [from attending the supper].' 19) And another person said, 'I just bought five teams of oxen and I need to go and test them out, so please excuse me [from attending the supper].' 20) And the third person said, 'I just got married, so I cannot attend [the supper].' 21) Then the slave returned and told his master about these things. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring people who are poor, and handicapped, and blind and crippled in here [i.e., to the supper].' 22) And the slave said, 'Master, I did what you ordered me to do, and still there is room [at the dinner table].' 23) Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and along the brushy trails and urge people to attend [the supper] so that my house will be full [of guests].' 24) For I tell you, not one of those who were invited will [even] taste my supper."

25) Now large crowds were following Jesus and He turned

[around] and said to them, 26) "If anyone comes to me [i.e., to be my disciple], and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters and, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27) [And] whoever does not carry his own cross [i.e., his responsibilities with all their difficulties] and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28) For which one of you who wants to build a [lookout] tower will not first sit down and calculate its cost, to see whether he has enough [money and materiel] to complete it? 29) For if he does not, maybe after he has laid the foundation and [then] is not able to complete [the tower], everyone who sees it will ridicule him, 30) saying, 'This man began to build [a tower] but was not able to finish it.' 31) Or what king, planning to engage another king in war, will not first sit down and evaluate whether he will be able, with ten thousand [soldiers], to defeat someone who attacks him with twenty thousand [soldiers]? 32) Or maybe, while the enemy is still a long way off, he will send representatives to ask for peace terms. 33) So therefore, every one of you who does not say 'goodbye' to everything he owns, cannot be my disciple. 34) Therefore salt is good, but if it loses its flavoring [ability], how will it ever get it back again? 35) It is not suitable for the soil [i.e., for growing crops] or for fertilizer, but [only] for people to throw out. [See note on Matt. 5:13]. The person who has ears to hear with ought to listen [to this] carefully."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1) Now the tax collectors and worldly people were all gathering around Jesus to listen to Him. 2) And the Pharisees and experts in the law of Moses both complained, saying, "This man welcomes worldly people and [even] eats with them."

3) So, Jesus told them this parable, saying, 4) "Which one of you who has a hundred sheep, and loses one of them, would not leave the ninety-nine in a deserted place and go looking for the lost one until he finds it? 5) And when he finds it, he places it on his shoulders [i.e., to return it], and is so glad. 6) And when he gets home, he calls his friends and neighbors together and says to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I found my sheep that was lost.' 7) I tell you that, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinful person who repents [i.e., changes his heart and life], than over ninety-nine persons who

do not need to repent.

8) Or what woman, who has ten silver coins [Note: These coins each amounted to about one day of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$60-\$84 in 1994], and if she loses one of them, would not light a lamp, sweep the house and search for it diligently until she finds it? 9) And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I found the coin I had lost.' 10) In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels [i.e., in heaven?] over one sinful person who repents."

11) Then Jesus said, "A certain man had two sons. 12) The younger one said to his father, 'Father, [please] give me my share of your property that I have coming.' So, the father divided up what he had to live on [with his two sons]. 13) And a few days later, this younger son gathered everything together and traveled to a distant country where he squandered his possessions in wild living. 14) And when he had spent everything [he had], a severe famine occurred in that country and he became desperate for food. 15) So, he went to work for one of the citizens of that country who sent him to his fields to feed his hogs. 16) Now he wanted to fill his stomach with the [carob] pods the hogs were eating, but no one gave him any [or perhaps, anything else]. 17) But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread to eat, and here I am, dying from hunger! 18) I will get up and go to my father and say to him, Father, I have sinned against [the God of] heaven and against you. 19) I do not deserve to be called your son [anymore]. Consider me as [just] one of your hired servants.' 20) So, he got up and went to his father. But while he was still some distance [from the house], his father saw him and felt deep pity [for him], so ran and embraced him and kissed him [enthusiastically]. 21) Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against [the God of] heaven and against you. I do not deserve to be called your son.' 22) But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out the best robe and put it on him. And put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23) And bring the fattened calf, kill it and let us eat and enjoy ourselves. 24) For my son here was dead [spiritually], but is [now] alive again. He was lost [from me], but [now] is found.' And they began to celebrate. 25) Now the father's older son was [out] in the field. And when he came in and got close to the house he heard music and dancing. 26) So, he called one of the servants to him and asked what was going on.

27) And the servant said to him, 'Your brother has come [home] and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he welcomed him back safe [from harm].' 28) But the older son got angry and refused to go into [the house]. So, his father came out and pleaded with him [i.e., to come in and join the celebration]. 29) But he replied to his father, 'Look, I have served you [as a slave] for all these years and have never disobeyed any of your orders; yet you never gave me [even] a young goat, so I could enjoy myself with my friends. 30) But when this son of yours came [home], after having squandered all you gave him on prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.' 31) And the father replied, 'Son, you are always [here] with me, and everything I have is yours. 32) But it was [only] proper that we celebrate and have a good time, for this brother of yours was dead [spiritually], but is [now] alive again; he was lost [from me] but [now] is found.'"

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1) Then Jesus said to His disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a property manager who was reported to be squandering his possessions. 2) So, he called his property manager in and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in a [full] report of [all] your financial transactions, for you are not working for me anymore.' 3) Then the property manager said to himself, What am I going to do since my master is taking away my job? I am not strong enough to dig [i.e., as a farm laborer], and I am too ashamed to beg. 4) I know what I will do, so when I am fired they [i.e., his master's customers] will welcome me into their homes. 5) So, he called on each one of his master's customers and said to the first one, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6) And he replied, 'Eight hundred gallons of [olive] oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your contract and quickly sit down and write in four hundred [gallons].' 7) Then he said to another [customer], 'And how much do you owe [him]?' And he answered, 'One thousand bushels of wheat.' The property manager said to him, 'Take your contract and write eight hundred [bushels].' 8) So, his master commended the dishonest property manager for his shrewdness. For worldly people are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of light [i.e., God's people]. 9)

Therefore, I tell you, make friends for yourselves by using worldly wealth, so that when it fails [i.e., when you run out of money] they [i.e., the friends you made with its wise and benevolent use] may welcome you into the eternal [i.e., heavenly] dwelling places. [Note: The idea here seems to be that by your shrewd use of material possessions for the benefit of others, you are actually storing up treasures for yourself in heaven].

10) "The person who is trustworthy in regard to very small matters, [such as material possessions] is also [likely to be] trustworthy in regard to large matters, [such as spiritual values], and the person who does not do what is right in very small matters is also not [likely] to do what is right in large ones. **11)** If therefore you have not been trustworthy in worldly wealth, who will put you in charge of the true [spiritual] riches? **12)** And if you have not been trustworthy with what belongs to someone else, who will give you something of your own? **13)** "No person can serve two masters, for he will either hate the one and love the other, or else he will cling to the one [i.e., as a close friend] and look down on the other. You cannot serve God and material things [at the same time]."

14) Then the Pharisees, who loved money, heard these things and sneered at Jesus. **15)** And He said to them, "You are people who claim to be just in the eyes of [other] people, but God knows [what is in] your hearts. For that which is held up as most important among people [i.e., fame or fortune?] is disgusting in the eyes of God. **16)** The law of Moses and the prophets prophesied [See Matt. 11:13] until [the time of] John [the Immerser]. From that time onward the good news of the [coming] kingdom of God is [being] preached, and everyone is [attempting to] enter it forcibly [i.e., before its appointed time. See Acts 1:6-7]. **17)** But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away [i.e., to be destroyed. See II Pet. 3:3], than for one portion of a letter of the law of Moses to be dropped.

18) "Every person who divorces his wife and marries another woman becomes sexually unfaithful to her [i.e., because he is still regarded by God as married to his first wife. See Matt. 19:9]. And the person who marries someone who has been divorced by her husband commits sexual sin with her. [i.e., because she is still rightfully married to her first husband].

19) "Now there was a certain rich man who was dressed in purple [clothing] and soft linen [garments] and who lived every day in pleasure and luxury. **20)** And a certain beggar named Lazarus, who

was full of sores, was laid at the rich man's doorway. 21) He longed to be fed with scraps that fell from the rich man's table and even dogs came and licked his sores. 22) And it happened that the beggar died and [his spirit] was carried away by angels to a place close to Abraham. And the rich man also died and [his body] was buried. 23) And in the unseen place of departed spirits the rich man, who was being tormented, looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus close beside him. 24) And he shouted out, 'Forefather Abraham, take pity on me and send Lazarus [to me], so he can dip the tip of his finger in water [and touch] my tongue to cool it, because I am in agony in these flames.' 25) But Abraham said [to him], 'Son, remember how you enjoyed good things when you were alive [on earth] and how Lazarus had to put up with bad things? But now here [i.e., in the unseen place of departed spirits] he is being comforted and you are in agony. 26) And besides all this, there is a huge chasm situated between us and you so that those who wanted to go from here to there [where you are] cannot do it. And no one can cross over from there to us [over here].' 27) Then the rich man said, 'I beg you therefore, forefather [Abraham], that you would send Lazarus to my father's house, 28) where I have five brothers. Then he could warn them so that they will not [have to] come to this [terrible] place of torment also.' 29) But Abraham said, 'They have [the writings of] Moses and the prophets; let them pay attention to them.' 30) Then the rich man said, 'No, forefather Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, [then] they will repent [i.e., change their hearts and lives].' 31) And Abraham replied, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded [even] if someone rises from the dead [i.e., to come back and warn them].'"

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1) Then Jesus said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that occasions which cause people to be led astray [from God] will come, but it is too bad for that person who is responsible for it happening. 2) It would be good [i.e., better] for him to have had a huge millstone tied around his neck and be thrown into the ocean [Note: This "millstone" was a huge, circular stone rolled over grain to crush it and was moved by an animal walking in a circle], rather than having him cause one of these little ones [i.e., humble followers of the Lord] to be led astray [from God]. 3) Pay

attention to yourselves!

"If your brother sins, rebuke him [i.e., show him where he is wrong in hope of effecting a change]; and if he repents [i.e., changes his heart and life], forgive him. 4) And if he sins against you seven times a day and [then] comes to you seven times and says, 'I repent,' you should forgive him."

5) Then the apostles said to the Lord, "Give us more faith." 6) And the Lord said, "If you had faith as [small as] a mustard tree seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and replanted in the ocean,' and it would obey you."

7) "But which of you, whose slave is plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he comes in from the field, 'Come and sit right down to eat'? 8) Would you not say to him instead, 'Prepare the food for my meal [first] and get ready to serve me until I have had enough to eat and drink and [then] afterward you can eat and drink [yourself]'? 9) Would he thank his slave for doing the things that he was ordered to do? 10) So, you too, after you have done everything you were told to, should say, 'We are unworthy slaves. We have done [only] what we were supposed to do.'"

11) And it happened as Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem that He passed along the border between Samaria and Galilee. [Note: These were the next two provinces north of Judea]. 12) And as He entered a certain village, He was met by ten men with infectious skin diseases, who were standing some distance away [Note: Restrictions in the Jewish law prevented contact with persons having infectious diseases. See Lev. 13:45ff], 13) and shouting, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us." 14) And when Jesus saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests [See Lev. 13:49; 14:2ff]." And it happened, as they went [along], that they were healed. 15) Then one of them, seeing he had been healed, returned and praised God in a loud voice. 16) And he fell on his face at Jesus' feet and thanked Him. And he was a Samaritan. [Note: Samaritans were despised by the Jews and regarded as 'half-breeds']. 17) Jesus asked [those standing nearby], "Were there not ten men [who were] healed? Where are the [other] nine? 18) Did not anyone [else] come back to give praise to God, except this foreigner?" 19) Then Jesus said to the one [who had returned], "Get up and go on your way. Your faith has made you well."

20) And when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus answered them, "The kingdom

of God will not come the way you are looking for it. **21)** People will not be saying, 'Look, here [it is]!' or 'There [it is]!' For in fact, the kingdom of God is [now] among you [i.e., as represented by the presence and ministry of Jesus]."

22) Then He said to the disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of man [i.e., the time when the Messiah would deliver His people from tribulation], but you will not see it [i.e., such deliverance would not occur during their lifetimes]. **23)** And people will be saying to you, 'Look, there [He is]! Look, here [He is]! Do not leave or follow after them. **24)** For the Son of man [will come] in His day just like lightning which flashes from one part of the sky and lights up the other part. **25)** But first He must experience much suffering and be rejected by the people of this generation.

26) "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of man. **27)** People were eating and drinking and [men were] marrying and [women] were being given away in marriage [right up] until the day that Noah entered the ship and the Flood came and drowned them all.

28) "It happened in a similar way in the days of Lot [i.e., Abraham's nephew]. People were eating and drinking and buying and selling and planting and building. **29)** But on the day that Lot left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from the sky and consumed them all.

30) "It will be the same way on the day the Son of man is revealed [i.e., at His second coming]. **31)** On that day, the person who is on a housetop [Note: This was a flat area where people retired for rest, prayer, etc., with its stairway on the outside], whose belongings are [still] in his house, is not to go down and [attempt to] take any of them away. And the person who is in a field [i.e., doing farm work], also is not to return [to his house]. **32)** Remember [what happened to] Lot's wife! **33)** Whatever person tries to gain [everything to satisfy him in] life [here on earth] will lose [never ending life]. But whatever person [is willing to] lose [the comforts and security of] his life [here on earth] will preserve it [for eternity]. **34)** I tell you, on that night [i.e., when Jesus returns. See verse 30], there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken [i.e., to be with the Lord] while the other one will be left [i.e., to be punished by the Lord]. **35)** There will be two women grinding grain together [Note: This was done with a hand-operated millstone where two persons

sat across from each other and rotated a circular stone over kernels of grain]; one will be taken while the other one will be left. {{ Some ancient manuscripts include verse 36) There will be two men in a field [i.e., doing farm work]; one will be taken [i.e., to be with the Lord] while the other one will be left [i.e., to be punished by the Lord]. See Matt. 24:40}}" 37) And they asked Jesus, "Where [will this happen], Lord?" And He answered them, "Wherever there is a [dead] body [you will see] vultures gathered there also."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1) Then Jesus told His disciples a parable for the purpose of showing them that they should pray continually and not become discouraged. 2) He said, "There was a certain judge in this town who did not revere God nor respect man. 3) There was [also] a widow in that [same] town who kept coming to the judge saying, 'Grant me a [favorable] judgment against my opponent.' 4) And for some time the judge refused to do it. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I do not revere God or respect man, 5) I will grant her a [favorable] judgment because she keeps bothering me [about the matter] and is about to exhaust my patience by her persistent visits.'"

6) And the Lord said, "Listen to what [even] this unjust judge said [about the widow]. 7) So, will God not grant justice to His elect [i.e., His people] who call out to Him [i.e., in prayer] day and night? Will He be slow in helping them? 8) I tell you, He will grant justice to them quickly. However, will the Son of man find [very many] believing people on the earth when He returns?"

9) Then Jesus told this parable to certain ones who were relying on their own goodness and putting everyone else down: 10) "Two men went up to the Temple [in Jerusalem] to pray. One of them was a Pharisee and the other one was a tax collector. 11) The Pharisee stood up [conspicuously] and prayed about himself this way [i.e., bragging to God about how good he was], 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, sexually unfaithful to their mates, or even like that tax collector [over there]. 12) I fast [i.e., go without food and/or drink for religious reasons] twice a week and I give [to God's work] a tenth of everything I get.' 13) But the tax collector stood at a distance [i.e., inconspicuously] and would not

even look up to heaven, but struck his chest [i.e., in remorse], saying, 'God, [please] have mercy on a sinner like me.' 14) I tell you, this man went back home right with God instead of the other man. For every person who exalts himself [as important] will be humbled, but whoever humbles himself will be exalted [as important]."

15) People were bringing babies to Jesus so He could touch them [i.e., to bestow a blessing on them], but when His disciples saw this, they spoke harshly to these people. 16) But Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, "Allow these little children to come to me and stop trying to prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these [i.e., humble ones. See Matt. 19:14]. 17) Truly I tell you, whoever does not welcome the kingdom of God the way a little child does, that person will by no means enter it."

18) Then a certain ruler [Note: This man was young and rich. See Matt. 19:16-22] asked Jesus, "Good Teacher, what should I do in order to inherit never ending life?" 19) Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me 'good'? No one is good except God only. 20) You know the commandments: Do not be sexually unfaithful to your mate. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not give false testimony. Show honor to your father and mother." 21) And the ruler replied, "I have [already] been observing all of these commandments since I was [very] young." 22) When Jesus heard this He said to him, "[There is] one thing you still lack. Sell all your possessions and distribute [the money] to poor people; become my follower, [then] you will have treasure in heaven." 23) But when the ruler heard these words, he became very sad for he was extremely rich. 24) Now Jesus looked at him and said, "How difficult [it is] for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! 25) For it is [actually] easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a wealthy person to enter the kingdom of God."

26) And those who heard this said, "Then who can [possibly] be saved?" 27) Jesus answered, "The things that are impossible with people are [certainly] possible with God." 28) Then Peter said, "Look, we have left our homes to follow you." 29) And Jesus said to the disciples, "Truly I tell you, there is no person who has left his house, or wife, or brothers, or parents, or children for the sake of the kingdom of God [i.e., to become a servant of the Lord], 30) who will not receive [back] many times as much [as he left in this life], and never ending life in the coming age."

31) Then Jesus took the twelve apostles with Him, saying to them, "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem and [while there] everything written in [the writings of] the prophets will be fulfilled concerning the Son of man. **32)** For He will be turned over to the [unconverted] Gentiles, and will be mocked, and insulted and spit on. **33)** [The Romans] will flog Him and kill Him, but on the third day He will rise again [from the dead]."

34) But His disciples did not understand [what He meant by] any of these things, for this message was hidden from them so they did not comprehend what He was saying.

35) And it happened as Jesus was approaching Jericho [Note: This was a town about eighteen miles northeast of Jerusalem], that a certain blind man was [seen] sitting along side of the road, begging. **36)** As he heard a crowd of people passing by, he asked [someone] what was happening. **37)** And he was told that Jesus from Nazareth was passing by [that way]. **38)** So, he shouted out, "Jesus, you son of David, take pity on me." **39)** But those walking in front [of Jesus] spoke harshly to the blind beggar, telling him to be quiet. But he continued shouting all the more, "You son of David, take pity on me." **40)** So, Jesus stopped and ordered the beggar to be brought to Him. And when he came near, Jesus asked him, **41)** "What do you want me to do for you?" And he replied, "Lord, I want to receive my sight." **42)** And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight, your faith has made you well." **43)** And immediately his sight was restored and he followed Jesus, giving honor to God. And when all the people saw this, they [too] praised God.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

1) So, Jesus [finally] entered Jericho and was traveling through it. **2)** Just then, there appeared a man named Zacchaeus, who was a wealthy, chief tax collector. **3)** He was trying to see which one was Jesus, but could not due to the large crowd and [because] he was so short. **4)** So, he ran on ahead [of the crowd] and climbed up a mulberry tree [Note: This was a tree that produced a fig-like fruit] in order to see Jesus, who was supposed to pass that way [soon]. **5)** And when Jesus came to the tree, He said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down [from that tree], for I need to stay at your house today." **6)** So, he

came down immediately and welcomed Jesus gladly. 7) And when the crowd saw this, they began complaining [i.e., because Zacchaeus was a despised tax collector] and said, "He is going to lodge with a sinful man." 8) Then Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I [plan to] give half of my possessions to poor people. And if I have cheated anyone out of something, [I promise] to repay them four times as much." 9) Then Jesus said to him, "Salvation has come to this house today, since he too [i.e., Zacchaeus] is a descendant of Abraham." 10) For the Son of man came to search for and save those who were lost."

11) And as the crowd listened to these things, Jesus told them another parable, because He was close to Jerusalem and they assumed the kingdom of God was going to appear right away. 12) So, He said, "A certain distinguished gentleman went to a distant country to receive a royal appointment [i.e., as king over a territory] and then return. [Note: This is the only parable of Jesus' that correlates with a known incident; that of Herod's son Archelaus going to Rome to receive from Caesar Augustus an appointment to rule over Judea, Samaria and Idumaea in 4 B.C. See Matt. 2:22]. 13) So, he called ten of his slaves and gave each of them a sum of money [Note: The amount of each sum was equivalent to one hundred days of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$7,000 in 1994]. [Then] he said to them, 'Invest this money until I return.' 14) But the citizens [of his newly acquired kingdom] hated him and sent a delegation after him [i.e., to the person who appointed the gentleman king over them], saying, 'We do not want this man to rule over us.' 15) And it happened when the gentleman returned, having received his appointment as king, that he ordered the slaves to whom he had given the [sums of] money, to report to him. He wanted to find out how much [money] they had made on their investments. 16) So, the first one appeared in front of him, and said, 'Master, your sum of money has earned ten times more.' 17) And the gentleman replied, 'Well done, you are a good slave. Because you have proven trustworthy over a [relatively] very small matter, you will [now] have charge over ten towns.' 18) Then the second slave appeared, and said, 'Master, your sum of money has earned five times more.' 19) And the gentleman said to him also, 'You [will] have charge over five towns.' 20) Then another slave appeared and said, 'Look, master, here is your sum of money. I kept it [safely] wrapped up in a cloth, 21) for I was afraid of you, knowing you are a hard man to deal with and that you pick up [and keep] something you did not lay down [i.e., lose], and

you harvest a crop that you did not plant.' 22) The gentleman replied to him, 'I will judge you [based] on what you [yourself] have [just] said, you evil slave. [Since] you knew that I am a hard man to deal with, picking up [and keeping] something I had not laid down, and harvesting a crop I had not planted, 23) then why did you not deposit my money in the bank? [Then] when I returned I could have withdrawn [the original sum of money] plus interest.' 24) Then he said to those who were standing around, 'Take the sum of money away from him and give it to the one who made ten times as much [with the original sum].' 25) But the people said to him, 'Master, he [already] has ten times as much money [as you gave him.].' 26) [So the gentleman concluded], 'I tell you, to every person who [already] has something, [more] will be given, but from that person who has [almost] nothing, even [the little] he has will be taken away from him. 27) But bring those enemies of mine here [i.e., the citizens. See verse 14], who did not want me to rule over them, and kill them in front of me.'"

28) And when Jesus had said this, He went on ahead [of His disciples. See Matt. 21:1] up to Jerusalem.

29) And it happened when Jesus got close to Bethphage and Bethany [Note: These were two small towns about two miles east of Jerusalem], at a hill called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples, 30) saying [to them], "Go into the village just ahead of you, and upon entering [it], you will find tied up [there] a colt that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it [here]. 31) And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you should say, 'The Lord needs it.' "

32) So, those who were sent [i.e., Jesus' disciples], went away and found [things] just as Jesus had told them. 33) And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' 34) And they replied, 'The Lord needs it.' 35) So, they brought the colt to Jesus and spread their clothing on it, [then] placed Jesus on it [i.e., held the animal still as Jesus mounted it, since it had never been ridden before. See verse 30]. 36) And as He rode [along], people spread their clothing on the roadway.

37) Then, as He descended the Mount of Olives and got close to the city [i.e., Jerusalem], the entire crowd of disciples began joyfully praising God in loud voices because of all the powerful miracles they had seen [Him perform]. 38) They were saying, 'May the King who comes in the name [i.e., by the authority] of the Lord,

be blessed. May there be peace in heaven and praise [to God] in the highest [i.e., may this praise reach to the highest heaven].'

39) But some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, speak sternly to your disciples [i.e., to prevent them from honoring Jesus]." 40) But He answered them, "I tell you, if these people remain quiet [about me], [then] the stones will shout [about it]."

41) And when Jesus got close and saw the city [of Jerusalem], He cried over it, 42) saying, "If [only] you people realized today those things which [could] lead [you] to peace! But now they are [being] hidden from your sight. 43) For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build a dirt wall around you, surrounding you, and hemming you in on every side. 44) They will throw you and your children, [who are] within your walls, to the ground and they will not allow one stone to remain on top of another in your city because you did not recognize that [God was] visiting you [with punishment]." [Note: This was undoubtedly a reference to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70].

45) Then Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out those who sold [things there], 46) saying to them, "It is written [Isa. 56:7], 'And my house [i.e., the Temple] will be a house for prayer, but [Jer. 7:11] 'You have made it a hideout for thieves.'"

47) And Jesus was teaching in the Temple every day. But the leading priests and the experts in the law of Moses and the leading men of the people were looking [for a way] to kill Him, 48) but they could not find a way to do it, because all the people were listening to Him attentively.

CHAPTER TWENTY

1) And it happened on one of the days that Jesus was teaching people in the Temple and preaching the good news, that the leading priests and the experts in the law of Moses, [along] with the [Jewish] elders, came to Him. 2) They said to Him, "Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things [i.e., miracles and teaching]? Or, who is the one who gave you this authority?" 3) And Jesus answered them, "Let me also ask you a question. Tell me, 4) was the immersion of John [authorized] from heaven or from men?" 5) And they

discussed this among themselves, saying, "If we say 'from heaven,' He will say 'Why [then] did you not believe him [i.e., believe his message]?' 6) But if we say 'from men,' all the people will stone us, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." 7) Then they answered Jesus that they did not know [who authorized John's immersion]. 8) So, Jesus said to them, "[Then] neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

9) Then Jesus began speaking to the people. [Note: And perhaps to the religious leaders as well. See Mark 11:18 with 12:1]. He told them this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, then leased it out to tenant farmers and went to another country for a long time. 10) And when the [grape harvest] season came, the owner of the farm sent a slave to the tenant farmers, asking them for the grape harvest [to be delivered to him]. But the tenant farmers beat the slave and sent him away empty handed. 11) Then he sent out another slave [i.e., to arrange for receiving the crop], but the tenant farmers beat him also, shamefully abused him and sent him away empty handed [as well]. 12) So, he sent a third [slave] and they wounded him also and threw him out [of the vineyard]. 13) Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do [about this]? I will send my dearly loved son. Hopefully, they will treat him with respect.' 14) But when the tenant farmers saw him, they began reasoning with one another, saying, 'This is the heir [to the vineyard]; let us kill him so the inheritance will be ours.' 15) So, they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? [Jesus asked]. 16) He will come and kill those tenant farmers and will give the vineyard to other people."

And when the people heard [Him say] this, they said, "May that never happen." 17) But Jesus looked at them and said, "Then what does it mean that is written [Psa. 118:22], 'The building block rejected by the builders [is] the same [one] that was made the principal stone by which the entire building was aligned?' 18) Every person who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but whoever it falls on will be scattered like dust."

19) Then the experts in the law of Moses and the leading priests attempted to arrest Jesus right away, [but hesitated] because they feared [what] the people [might do], since they perceived that He had spoken this parable against them.

20) And they kept watching Him, [even] sending informants

who pretended to be good [men], in order to get hold of something He said so they could turn Him over to the ruling authority of the governor. 21) And they asked Him, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach correctly and that you do not show partiality to anyone, but [rather] teach the truth about God's way. 22) Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" 23) But Jesus perceived their trickery, and said to them, 24) "Show me the coin [used for paying the taxes].

[Note: This coin was equivalent to one day of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$60-\$84 in 1994]. Whose image and inscription are on this coin?" And they answered Him, "Caesar's." 25) He replied, "Then pay to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar and pay to God the things that belong to God."

26) And they were not able to get hold of anything Jesus said in front of the people. And they marvelled at His answer and did not say anything [further].

27) [Then] certain Sadducees came to Jesus (they are the ones who say there is no resurrection [of the dead]). 28) They said to Him, "Teacher, Moses wrote to us [Deut 25:5] that if a man's brother dies, leaving his widow [behind] without having had any children, his brother should marry his widow and father children [by her]. These children would then be considered his [dead] brother's. 29) [Now] there were these seven brothers; the first one got married, but when he died he did not leave any children behind. 30) Then the second one did the same thing. 31) Then the third one married the [surviving] widow [of the first two brothers]. And in the same way, all seven [brothers] married her, but left no children [behind when they died]. 32) Finally, the woman also passed away. 33) [Now] whose wife will she be in the resurrected state, for all seven [brothers] were married to her?"

34) And Jesus said to them, "The people of this age [i.e., who live on earth] marry and are given away in marriage, 35) but those who are considered worthy of gaining that age [i.e., the future, never ending state] and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given away in marriage. 36) For they cannot die anymore either, because they are equal to the angels and are children of God, as well as children of the resurrection [i.e., people who are assured of being resurrected]. 37) But even Moses showed that dead people would be raised in the incident about the bush [Ex. 3:6], where he called the Lord, 'Abraham's God, and Isaac's God, and Jacob's God.' 38) So, He is not God to those who are dead, but [He is] God to those who are

alive, for to God, all people are alive."

39) Then certain experts in the law of Moses replied to Jesus, "Teacher, you have spoken well." **40)** For they did not dare ask Him any more questions.

41) And Jesus said to them [i.e., the Pharisees. See Matt. 22:41], "How is it that they [i.e., the experts in the law of Moses. See Mark 12:35] can say that the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one] is the son of David? **42)** For David himself said in the book of Psalms [Psa. 110:1], 'The Lord [i.e., God] said to my [i.e., David's] Lord [i.e., Jesus], sit at my right side **43)** until I make your enemies the footrest [i.e., in subjection] under your feet.' **44)** Since David called Him [i.e., Jesus] Lord, how could He be his son?"

45) Then Jesus said to His disciples in the hearing of all the people, **46)** "Look out for the experts in the law of Moses, who like to walk [around] in long [flowing] robes and love the special greetings they receive at the open shopping markets, and the principal seats in the synagogues, and the head places at dinner tables. **47)** They consume widows' houses [i.e., by foreclosing on them] and [then] cover it up by offering lengthy prayers. These people will receive a heavier judgment."

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1) Then Jesus looked up [i.e., from his seated position at the entrance to the Temple], and saw people throwing their gifts [of money] into the treasury [Note: This was a large open-mouthed container used for receiving offerings for meeting expenses of Temple upkeep]. **2)** And He saw a certain poor widow throwing two small copper coins into it [Note: These two coins amounted to about ten minutes of a farm laborer's pay, or about one dollar in 1994]. **3)** So, He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has thrown in more than all the rest [i.e., referring to the many rich people who were also throwing in money]. **4)** For all of them threw in from their abundance, but she threw in from her poverty all she had to live on."

5) Then, as someone [i.e., of His disciples. See Mark 13:1], spoke of how the Temple was decorated with beautiful stones and objects dedicated as gifts, Jesus said, **6)** "As for these things you are looking at, the time will come when there will not be one stone left on another here that will not be thrown down." **7)** So, they asked Him,

saying, "Teacher, when will these things [you just spoke of] happen? And what will be the sign [that indicates] when these things are about to be fulfilled?" 8) And He replied, "Pay attention, so that you are not led astray [from the truth]. For many [false teachers] will come, claiming to be me, and saying, 'I am [the Christ],' and 'The time is near.' [But] do not go after them. 9) And when you hear of wars and uprisings [going on], do not be afraid, for such things must necessarily happen first. But the end will not come right away." [Note: By "the end" here Jesus probably alludes to the downfall of Jerusalem, in AD 70, with its attending destruction of the Temple buildings].

10) Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Nations will wage war against one another and kingdoms will attack one another. 11) And great earthquakes will happen, and at various places there will be famines and disease epidemics. And there will be fearful events and great [supernatural] signs from heaven. 12) But before all these things happen, the authorities will grab hold of you, and persecute you, and turn you over to the synagogues and prisons [i.e., for punishment and confinement]. They will take you in front of kings and governors for being loyal to me. 13) It will result in [an opportunity for] witnessing to them. 14) Determine in your hearts, therefore, not to plan ahead how you will answer them [when interrogated], 15) for I will give you a mouth [i.e., the ability to speak properly] and wisdom [i.e., the knowledge of what to say], which none of your opponents will be able to resist or speak against. 16) But you will be turned over [i.e., to the authorities for punishment] even by [your own] parents and brothers and relatives and friends. And they will [even] put some of you to death. 17) And you will be hated by all people for being loyal to me. 18) However, not one hair of your head will be lost. 19) [But], by holding out steadfastly, you will gain your life. [Note: This means either "preserve your earthly life," or "attain never ending life"].

20) "So, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by [Roman] armies, then you will know that her total destruction is near. 21) Then those [of you] in Judea are to run away into the [nearby] mountains. And those who are inside of the city are to leave it [immediately]. And those who are in the countryside should not enter the city. 22) For these are times for punishment [i.e., to be inflicted on Jerusalem], so that everything written [i.e., by the prophets] may be fulfilled [i.e., about Jerusalem's destruction. See Dan. 9:26-27]. 23) It will be too bad for pregnant women and those who are nursing [babies] in those

days! For there will be great distress in this land [i.e., Judea, and especially Jerusalem], and raging anger [will be shown] against these people [i.e., by the Roman armies]. **24)** And people will die by the sword and be led captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled on by the [unconverted] Gentiles [i.e., by the Romans and later by others] until the times of [domination by] the Gentiles are fulfilled.

25) "Then [Note: This event answers to the "immediately" of Matt. 24:29, and suggests the next major event on God's calendar] there will be [supernatural] signs [evident] in the sun and moon and stars. And on earth [there will be] distress among nations; they will be perplexed by the roaring of the ocean's churning waves. [Note: Probably this is figurative language for highly agitated conditions on earth]. **26)** Men will become despondent from fear, and from dreading the [terrible] things which will come upon the earth, for the forces of the heavens will be shaken. **27)** And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great splendor [Note: This no doubt refers to the second coming of Christ. See II Pet. 3:9-10; Matt. 24:30-31; Rev. 1:7]. **28)** But when these things begin to happen, stand up and lift up your heads [i.e., in anticipation], for your redemption [i.e., deliverance, either from destruction or condemnation] is getting closer."

29) Then Jesus told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, as well as all [other] trees: **30)** When they begin to sprout their leaves you know when you look at them, without being told, that summer is near. **31)** In the same way also, when you see these things happening [i.e., the above mentioned "signs"], you can know that the kingdom of God [i.e., either its heavenly phase or the destruction of Jerusalem] is near. **32)** "Truly I tell you, the people of this generation will not [all] die off before all these things [i.e., mentioned above] happen. **33)** Although the sky and the earth will pass away [See II Pet. 3:10], my words will not pass away [i.e., they will certainly come true].

34) "But pay attention to yourselves so that your hearts do not become overburdened by carousing, and drunkenness, and the worries of life. [If you do], that 'day' [i.e., Jesus' second coming and judgment] will arrive suddenly, like a trap [i.e., which catches an animal by surprise]. **35)** For that is the way this 'day' will arrive for everyone [else] living on the entire earth. **36)** But you should be alert at all times, offering earnest prayers, so that you will be strong enough to escape all these things that will happen, and to appear

[acceptable] in front of the Son of man [on that day]."

37) Now Jesus was teaching in the Temple every day, and He went out and lodged on the hill called Olivet every night [Note: Possibly this meant He lodged in a house in Bethany, which was situated on the side of this hill]. **38)** And all the people came to hear Him early [each] morning.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1) Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching. [Note: This was the annual Jewish festival commemorating Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage under Moses' leadership]. **2)** And the leading priests and experts in the law of Moses were looking for a way to kill Jesus because they were afraid of the people [i.e., that people would riot if it were done during the Festival. See Matt. 26:5].

3) Then Satan entered the heart of Judas, called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve apostles. **4)** So, he left [probably the house of Simon, the man healed of an infectious skin disease. See Matt. 26:6-13] and went and discussed with the leading priests and captains [i.e., of the Temple guard] how he could turn Jesus over to them. **5)** And they were very pleased, so agreed to give him money. **6)** So Judas consented [to their offer] and looked for a [good] opportunity to turn Jesus over to them [i.e., the Jewish leaders] when the crowd was not present.

7) Then the day came for the Festival of Unleavened Bread [to be held], on which the Passover [lamb] was to be sacrificed. **8)** So, Jesus sent Peter and John [to Jerusalem], saying, "Go and prepare for us to eat the Passover [meal]." **9)** And they said to Him, "Where do you want us to prepare [for it]?" **10)** And He replied to them, "Look, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you; follow him into whatever house he goes. **11)** Then you should say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' **12)** And he will show you a large, completely furnished upstairs room. Make preparations [for us] there [i.e., to observe the Passover Festival]." **13)** So, they went and found [everything] just as Jesus told them [it would be], and they prepared for the Passover meal.

14) And when the time came [for the Passover meal], Jesus reclined with His apostles [at the table]. [Note: See Matt. 23:6]. **15)** And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover meal with you [men] before I suffer [i.e., torture and death]. **16)** For I tell you, I will not eat it again until [I do so when] it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God [See Matt. 26:29].

17) Then Jesus took a cup [Note: This was one of the cups partaken of during the Passover meal], and after giving thanks to God [for it], He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves, **18)** for I tell you, I will not drink this fruit of the vine [i.e., grape juice] from now on until [I do, figuratively, when] the kingdom of God has come." **19)** Then He took a [small] loaf of bread, and after He had given thanks to God, He broke it and gave [pieces] to His apostles, and said, "This is [i.e., represents] my [physical] body which is [to be] given for you; continue to do this [i.e., eat it regularly] to remember me by."

20) And in the same way He took [another] cup, after the [Passover] meal, and said, "This cup is [i.e., represents] the new Agreement [i.e., between God and mankind] made by my blood, which is [to be] poured out for you. **21)** But look, the hand of the one who is turning me over [i.e., to the Jewish leaders] is with me on the table [i.e., dipping his hand in the sauce bowl. See Matt. 26:23]. **22)** For the Son of man is certainly going [to die], just as it has been [pre-] determined, but it is too bad for that person through whom He is [being] betrayed!" **23)** So, the apostles began discussing among themselves which one of them would do such a thing.

24) Then a dispute arose among the apostles as to which one of them should be considered the greatest. **25)** And Jesus said to them, "The kings of the [unconverted] Gentiles lord it over their own people, and those who domineer over them are called 'Benefactors' [Note: This was a title used by Greek kings in Egypt and Syria]. **26)** But it will not be that way among you, for the person who is the most important among you should become [like] the youngest [i.e., least important]. And the person who is the leader should become like the servant. **27)** For who is most important, the person who reclines at the dinner table or the person who serves [him]? Is it not the person who reclines at the dinner table? But I am among you as the person who serves. **28)** Now you apostles are the ones who have remained with me throughout my trials, **29)** and just as my Father assigned a kingdom to me, so I am assigning a kingdom to you, **30)** so you can eat and drink at my table

in my [coming] kingdom. [Also] you will sit on [twelve] thrones [See Matt. 19:28], judging the twelve tribes of Israel [i.e., judging God's people through their writings].

31) Simon, Simon [i.e., Peter], Satan has earnestly requested the right to sift you like wheat. [Note: Grain was sifted by using a sieve-like device in which grain and particles of dirt and straw were shaken together, allowing the grain to fall through while the dirt and straw remained. This was an allusion to the agitating trials Peter was soon to endure, and survive]. **32)** But I prayed earnestly for you, that your faith would not fail [to be strong]. And when you have turned back [i.e., from going astray briefly], provide [spiritual] support to your brothers." **33)** And Peter replied, "Lord, I am ready to go to prison and to death with you." **34)** And Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, you will deny [even] knowing me three times before the rooster crows today."

35) Then Jesus said to them, "When I sent you out without a money belt, or traveling bag [i.e., for personal belongings], or sandals, did you lack anything"? And the apostles answered, "[No], nothing." **36)** Then He said to them, "But this time the person who has a money belt should take it, and also [he should take] a traveling bag. And if he does not have a sword, he should sell his coat and buy one. **37)** For I tell you that this [passage of Scripture], which was written about me, must be fulfilled [Isa. 53:12]: 'And He [i.e., Jesus] was counted with [i.e., as though He were one of] the criminals.' For the part [of that passage] that refers to me is being fulfilled." **38)** And the apostles said, "Look, Lord, we have two swords [here]." And Jesus replied, "That is enough." [Note: Possibly Jesus means, "enough talk about weapons"].

39) Then Jesus went out to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed to doing [each evening during His final week], and His disciples followed Him. **40)** And when He got there He said to them, "Pray that you do not give in [i.e., to the devil] under trials." **41)** Then Jesus went away from them about the distance of a stone's throw and knelt down and prayed, **42)** saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup [i.e., of suffering] away from me; nevertheless, let it not be what I want, but what you want [for me]." **43)** Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him. [See Matt. 4:11]. **44)** And He became anguished as He prayed more fervently; even His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

45) And when He got up from praying He went to His disciples and found them asleep, exhausted from grief. **46)** So, He

said to them, "Why were you sleeping? Get up and pray so you do not give in [to the devil] under trials."

47) While He was still speaking suddenly one of the twelve apostles, named Judas, [who was] leading a crowd, came near Jesus to kiss Him. **48)** But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of man with a kiss?"

49) And when [the rest of] the disciples, who were gathered around Jesus, saw what was about to happen, they said, "Lord, do you want us to strike them with a sword?" **50)** Then a certain one of them struck the head priest's slave and sheared off his right ear. [Note: It was Peter who struck this man, whose name was Malchus. See John 18:10]. **51)** But Jesus replied, "Stop it; [that is] enough!" Then He touched the man's [partially severed] ear and healed him.

52) And Jesus said to the leading priests and captains of the Temple [guard] and the [Jewish] elders that came to take Him, "Have you come out [to arrest me] with swords and clubs as you would [apprehend] a thief? **53)** When I was with you every day in the Temple you did not raise a hand against me. But this is your hour [i.e., the time for you to act against me] and the power of darkness [has now taken over]."

54) Then they arrested Jesus and led Him away to the head priest's house [i.e., Caiaphas. See Matt. 26:57]. But Peter followed Him from a distance [i.e., as they went to the head priest's courtyard]. **55)** And when they [i.e., the priest's servants] had built a fire in the middle of the courtyard, they sat down together [i.e., to warm themselves. See Mark 14:67], with Peter [sitting] among the group. **56)** Then a certain [servant] girl saw Peter sitting there in the light of the fire. As she stared at him she said, "This man was with Jesus, too." **57)** But Peter denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not [even] know Him."

58) Then a little while later, someone else saw Peter and said, "You are one of them also [i.e., one of Jesus' disciples]." But Peter replied, "Man, I am not."

59) And about an hour later someone else stated emphatically, "I know for sure that this man was also with him [i.e., Jesus], for he is from Galilee [too]." [Note: Peter's accent gave him away. See Matt. 26:73]. **60)** But then Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Just then, as he was speaking, the rooster crowed.

61) Then the Lord turned and gave Peter a [penetrating]

glance. And Peter remembered the words of the Lord, how He had said to him, "You will deny [knowing] me three times before the rooster crows today." 62) Then Peter went out and cried bitterly.

63) Now the men who were holding Jesus [in custody] began mocking Him and beating Him. 64) And they blindfolded Him and asked Him, "Prophecy, who is it that hit you?" 65) And they said many other derogatory things against Him.

66) And when it became daylight, the body of [Jewish] elders of the people, [consisting of] both leading priests and experts in the law of Moses, was gathered together. Then they led Jesus away to their Council [called the "Sanhedrin"], and asked Him, 67) "Tell us if you are the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one]." But He replied, "You would not believe me if I [did] tell you [who I am]. 68) And if I asked you [who I am] you would not answer. 69) But from now on the Son of man will be seated at the right side of the powerful God." 70) So, they all asked [Him], "Then are you the Son of God?" And He answered them, "You [are right to] say that I am [the Christ]." 71) And they replied, "Why do we need any more evidence? For we have heard [enough] from his own mouth, ourselves."

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

1) Then the entire group of them [i.e., of the Jewish elders, priests and law experts] got up [from their Council meeting] and took Jesus to [governor] Pilate. 2) They began bringing accusations against Him, saying, "We discovered this man misleading the people of our nation and telling them not to pay taxes to Caesar, and claiming that he himself was the Messiah, a king!" 3) So, Pilate asked Him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" And Jesus answered him, "You have said so."

4) Then Pilate said to the leading priests and to the crowds [that had gathered], "I do not find anything wrong with this man." 5) But the group became more insistent, saying, "He is stirring up the people and teaching [these things] throughout all Judea. He began [doing this] in Galilee and [has continued it] even to this place [i.e., Jerusalem]." 6) When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man were a Galilean. 7) And when he realized that Jesus was under Herod's [political] jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in

Jerusalem at that time.

8) Now Herod was very pleased when he saw Jesus for he had wanted to see Him for a long time. He had heard [things] about Jesus and [now] hoped to see Him perform a miracle. 9) So, he asked Him many questions, but Jesus did not respond to any [of them]. 10) Then the leading priests and experts in the law of Moses stood up and viciously charged Him [i.e., with false accusations]. 11) Then Herod and his soldiers treated Jesus with contempt and mocked Him. They dressed Him in a luxurious robe and then sent Him back to Pilate. 12) So, Herod and Pilate became mutual friends that very day. (Now before this they had been enemies).

13) Then Pilate called together the leading priests, the [Jewish] leaders and the people, 14) and said to them, "You brought this man to me, claiming he was inciting people to disloyalty [i.e., to the government]. And look, I questioned him in front of you people but did not find him guilty of the charges you 15) or Herod have brought [against him]. For Herod sent him back to us and now I find that he has not done anything deserving of death. 16) Therefore, I will have him punished and [then] release him." {{Some ancient manuscripts include verse 17) For Pilate was required to release one prisoner to the people at the [Passover] Festival}}. 18) But the people all joined together shouting, "Take this man [i.e., Jesus] and release Barabbas to us [instead]." 19) [Now] Barabbas was a person who had been thrown into prison for [inciting] a rebellion in the city [of Jerusalem] and for committing murder. 20) Then Pilate spoke to them again [because] he wanted to release Jesus, 21) but they continued shouting, "Crucify him, crucify him."

22) So, Pilate called out to them a third time, "Why [should he be crucified]; what wrong has this man done? I have not found any reason for putting him to death, so I will punish him and [then] release him." 23) But the people loudly demanded that Jesus be crucified. And their shouting won out. 24) So, Pilate issued the sentence the people were demanding 25) and released the man they had asked for [i.e., Barabbas], who had been thrown into prison for [inciting] a rebellion and committing murder. But he turned Jesus over to the people do with Him whatever they wanted.

26) Then, as they were leading Jesus away, the soldiers [See Mark 15:16-21] grabbed hold of a man named Simon, from Cyrene [Note: This was a city in the northern African country of Libya], who was coming in

from the countryside, and placed the cross [i.e., probably only the cross-beam portion] on him, so he could carry it while following Jesus.

27) A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including some women who wailed [in grief] and mourned over His plight. **28)** But Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem [i.e., women citizens], do not cry over me, but cry over yourselves and your children. **29)** For look, the time will come when people will be saying, 'Those [women] who are without children and who have never given birth or nursed babies are [truly] happy!' **30)** Then they will begin to say to the mountains [Hosea 10:8], 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us [up].' **31)** For if people are doing these things [to me] while the [leaves of the] tree are green [i.e., to someone innocent of wrongdoing], what will they do when [the leaves] are dried up [i.e., to the sinful Jews of Jerusalem]?"

32) And two other men, who were criminals, were also led out with Jesus to be put to death.

33) And when they came to the place called "The Skull" [Note: The Latin word for this place is "Calvary"], they crucified Him there, along with the criminals, one at His right side and one at His left. **34)** Then Jesus called out, "Father, forgive these people [i.e., the ones responsible for crucifying Him], for they do not know [i.e., realize] what they are doing." Then the soldiers [See John 19:23] divided Jesus' clothing among them by gambling for them.

35) People stood [around] watching [all this], while the leaders even sneered at Him, saying, "He saved other people; [now] let him save himself [i.e., from dying] if he [really] is the Christ, God's specially chosen one."

36) The soldiers also mocked Him; they came to Him, offering Him sour wine [to drink], **37)** saying, "If you [really] are the King of the Jews, save yourself." **38)** There was an inscription above Him [i.e., on the upright portion of the cross], stating, "This is the king of the Jews."

39) Then one of the criminals, who was hanging [on a cross also] spoke abusively to Him, saying, "Are you not the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one]? [If you are], then save yourself and us." **40)** But the other criminal spoke harshly to the first one, saying, "Do you not even have any fear of God [left], since you [too] are experiencing the same sentence of condemnation? **41)** And for us it

is truly a just sentence, for we are getting back what we deserve for our actions, but this man has not done anything wrong." 42) Then he said, "Jesus, remember [to be merciful to] me when you come into your kingdom." 43) Then Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise [Note: This is a place in God's presence, referred to as "the third heaven" (II Cor. 12:2-4), and where overcomers will be able to eat from "the tree of life" (Rev. 2:7)]."

44) Now when it was about twelve o'clock noon, darkness came over all the land until three o'clock in the afternoon, for 45) the sun's light failed to shine. Then the Temple curtain became torn down the middle. 46) Jesus called out in a loud voice, "Father, I commit my spirit into your hands." And after He said this, He gave up His spirit [i.e., to God in death].

47) And when the military officer in charge of one hundred men saw what had happened, he honored God [by] saying, "Certainly this man had [always] done what was right." 48) And after the crowds that had gathered to witness this sight saw what had happened they left, beating their chests [i.e., as an expression of anguish over witnessing Jesus' death]. 49) And all of those who knew Him, as well as the women who had followed Him from Galilee [See Matt. 27:55-56], watched all this from a distance.

50) And just then [there appeared] a member of the [Jewish] Council named Joseph from the city of Arimathea. He was a good man who tried to do what was right, 51) (and who had not agreed with the decision and action of the [Jewish] Council). He was expecting the kingdom of God [to appear soon]. 52) [So], Joseph went to [governor] Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53) [Upon receiving permission] he took it down [from the cross] and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and placed it in a grave site, cut out of [a ledge of] rock, where no one had ever been buried. 54) This happened on the Day of Preparation [for the Passover Festival], as the Sabbath day was about to begin [i.e., shortly before 6 PM on Friday].

55) The women who had accompanied Jesus from Galilee followed behind [those carrying the body] and saw where the grave site was and how His body was placed in it. 56) So, they returned [home] and prepared spices and [aromatic] oils [i.e., for embalming Jesus' body].

Then they rested on the Sabbath day according to the [fourth] commandment. [See Ex. 20:10].

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

1) Now at early dawn on the first day of the week [i.e., early Sunday morning], the women [See Mark 16:1] went to Jesus' grave site, taking the spices which they had prepared [for His burial]. 2) But they found the stone [had already been] rolled away from the [opening of the] grave site. 3) So, they went in [i.e., into the cave-like tomb], but did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4) And it happened, while they wondered about the situation, suddenly two men in brilliant clothing [were seen] standing beside them. 5) As the women became terrified and bowed down with their faces toward the ground [i.e., in reverence and awe], the two men said to them, "Why are you looking for the living [One] where they bury dead people? 6) He is not here; for He has risen [from the dead]. [Do you not] remember what He told you when He was still in Galilee, saying, 7) 'The Son of man must be turned over into the hands of sinful men to be crucified, but the third day [He will] rise again [from the dead]?' 8) Then they remembered what He had said to them.

9) When they returned from the grave site, they told all this to the eleven apostles and to all the rest [of the disciples]. 10) Now the women who told these things to the apostles were Mary from Magdala; Joanna [Note: This was the wife of Chuzas, Herod's property manager. See Luke 8:3], and other women who were with them. 11) But these words seemed as nonsense to the apostles, and they refused to believe the women. { {Some ancient authorities do not include verse 12) But Peter got up and ran to the grave site. He stooped down [i.e., because of the low opening in the cave-like tomb], looked in and saw the linen cloths [lying there] by themselves. Then he went home, puzzled over what had happened} }.

13) Then, on that same day, two disciples [See Mark 16:12] were [walking along], going to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles [northwest] of Jerusalem. 14) And they were discussing with each other everything that had [recently] happened. 15) And it happened, as they were talking and discussing together, that Jesus came near [them] and began walking along with them. 16) But they were [miraculously?] prevented from recognizing who He was. 17) Then Jesus said to them, "What have you been talking about while [you were] walking along together?" And they stopped

[suddenly], looking dejected. **18)** Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered Jesus, "Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know what all happened there the past few days?" **19)** And He replied, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus, from Nazareth, who was a prophet speaking powerful words and performing powerful deeds in front of God and all the people. **20)** And the leading priests and our leaders turned him over to be sentenced to death and had him crucified. **21)** But we had hoped that he was the one who would purchase the Israelites back [from their bondage]. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. **22)** However, certain women of our group, who went to the grave site early [Sunday morning], amazed us. **23)** When they did not find Jesus' body, they came and told us that they had also seen a vision of angels who said Jesus was alive. **24)** Then some of our companions [i.e., Peter and John. See John 20:2-9] went to the grave site and found things just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus [either]."

25) Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish men! How slow your minds are to believe everything the prophets have spoken [in their writings]! **26)** Was it not necessary for the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one] to suffer these things, and [then] to enter His glorious state [with the Father]?" **27)** Then, beginning from [the writings of] Moses and all the prophets, Jesus explained to the two men about the things referring to Himself [contained] in all these Scripture passages.

28) And as they got close to the village [i.e., of Emmaus], where the men were going, Jesus appeared as though He were planning to continue on. **29)** So, the men urged Him to remain with them, saying, "Stay with us [i.e., overnight], because it is getting late and the day is almost over." So, He went [to their house] to stay with them.

30) And it happened when Jesus had reclined at the dinner table with them [Note: See Matt. 23:6], that He took a [small] loaf of bread, asked God's blessing on it, then broke it and gave [pieces] to the two men. **31)** [Immediately] their eyes were opened [i.e., they were given insight] so they could recognize Him. And [just then] He disappeared from their view [Note: The Greek says, "became invisible," suggesting that He vanished miraculously]. **32)** Then the two men said to each other, "Were not our hearts stirred up within us [i.e., our emotions thrilled] when Jesus

spoke to us along the road and opened up the Scriptures [to our understanding]?"

33) So, they got up at once and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven apostles gathered together with some other disciples. 34) The apostles were saying, "The Lord truly has risen and has appeared to Simon [i.e., Peter]." 35) Then the two men recounted what happened along the road and how Jesus was recognized by them when He broke the loaf of bread.

36) And as the apostles were talking about these things, Jesus Himself [reappeared], standing among them, and said to them, "May there be peace in your lives." 37) But they became frightened and [even] terrified, and assumed they were seeing a spirit. 38) Then Jesus said to them, "Why are you [so] upset? And why are you having doubts [about me] in your minds? 39) Look at my hands and my feet and realize that it is I, myself. Feel me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have." {{Some ancient authorities omit verse 40) And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet}}. 41) And while they still could not believe [i.e., or, could hardly believe], out of joy and wonderment, Jesus said to them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" 42) So, they gave Him a piece of broiled fish. 43) And He took it and ate it in front of them.

44) Then Jesus said to the apostles, "These are the words that I told you while I was still with you, [when I said] that everything written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms about me needed to be fulfilled."

45) Then He opened their minds [miraculously?] so they would understand the Scriptures. 46) And He said to them, "This is what was written: The Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one] will suffer, and [then] rise again from the dead on the third day. 47) And [the need for] a change of heart and life in order to receive the forgiveness of sins [from God] will be preached in Jesus' name [i.e., by His authority] to people of all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48) You apostles are [to be] witnesses of these things [i.e., they were to give their testimony of these truths. See Acts 1:8]. 49) And look, I [am going to] send upon you apostles what my Father promised [i.e., the Holy Spirit. See John 14:26]; but you should wait in the city [of Jerusalem] until you are clothed with power from above." [Note: This promise was fulfilled when the apostles were immersed in the Holy Spirit. See Acts 1:4 -

2:4].

50) Then Jesus led His apostles out [of Jerusalem] until they came near to Bethany [Note: This was a village fewer than two miles east of Jerusalem]. [There] He raised His hands and asked God's blessing on them. **51)** And it happened, as He was blessing them, that He left them and was taken up to heaven. **52)** And the apostles worshiped Jesus, then returned to Jerusalem with great joy. **53)** And they were there in the Temple [area] continually praising God [i.e., for the next ten days. See Acts 2].

JOHN

CHAPTER ONE

1) The Word [already] existed in the beginning [of time].

[Note: This is a reference to the preexistence of Jesus. See verse 14]. And the Word was with God and the Word was [what] God [was]. 2) This Word existed with God from the beginning [of time].

3) Everything came into being through this Word, and apart from Him not a single thing came into being. 4) Life existed in Him; and that Life [was what] enlightened mankind [spiritually]. 5) And [His] light continued to shine, [even] in the darkness [of the world], and that darkness did not overcome Him [or, did not fully understand Him].

6) There was a man sent from God whose name was John [the Immerser]. 7) He came to be a witness, so that he might testify concerning that Light, so that people would believe [in Jesus] through him [i.e., through his testimony. See Acts 19:4]. 8) He himself was not that Light, but came [only] to testify concerning that Light. 9) [Now] the true Light, who enlightens all mankind, was [indeed] coming into the world [i.e., to earth]. 10) [Actually] He was in the world [already], for the world came into being through Him, but the world did not acknowledge Him. 11) [Then] He came to His own [world, while on earth], but His own [people, the Israelites] did not welcome Him. 12) But He gave all those who did welcome Him the opportunity of becoming children of God by believing in His name [i.e., as the Messiah]. 13) [Such people] were born of God, not of blood ties [i.e., from physical descendants], nor of the will of the flesh [i.e., merely from a sexual desire], nor of the will of man [i.e., from a husband's desire for offspring].

14) [Eventually] this Word became a human being and lived among us [Note: The word "lived" here refers to pitching a temporary tent]. (And we saw His splendor; such splendor as belongs to the Father's only Son), full of God's favor and truth.

15) John gave testimony about Jesus, shouting out, "This person is the one about whom I said, 'He who will come after me ranks above me because He existed before me.'" 16) For we have all

received from His full richness one favor after another. 17) For the law was given through Moses; [but] God's favor and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18) No one has ever seen God [i.e., His full splendor], but God, the only conceived [and eventually born Son], who is at the Father's side, has shown us who He is.

19) And this is the testimony John [the Immerser] gave when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" [Note: Levites were men who assisted the priests in the Temple service]. 20) Then he declared openly, without denying it, "I am not the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one]." 21) So, they asked him, "Who then [are you]? Are you Elijah [i.e., returned from the dead]?" But he answered, "[No], I am not." "[Then], are you the prophet [i.e., Moses. See Deut. 18:15-19]?" they asked. And he answered, "No." 22) So, they asked him [again], "[Then], who are you? We need to take back an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 23) He replied, "I am the voice of a man who is calling out in the desert, [urging people to] 'Make the road for the Lord straight,' as Isaiah the prophet said, [Isa. 40:3]."

24) Now those who were sent [i.e., to question John] were Pharisees [i.e., a strict sect of the Jewish religion]. 25) They asked him, "Why do you immerse people then, if you are not the Christ, or Elijah, or the prophet [Moses]?" 26) So, John answered them, saying, "I am immersing people in water, but there is Someone among you whom you do not recognize. 27) He is the One who will follow my ministry; [and] I do not deserve to untie his sandal lace."

28) These things happened in Bethany on the east side of the Jordan River where John was immersing people. [Note: This was a different Bethany from the one just outside of Jerusalem].

29) On the next day John [the Immerser] saw Jesus approaching him and said, "Look, [there is] the Lamb of God; He [will] take away the sin of the people of the world. 30) He is the One about whom I said, 'A man will come after me who ranks above me, for He existed before me.' 31) And I would not have recognized Him, but I came immersing people in water so that He would become known to the Israelites."

32) So, John gave his testimony, saying, "I have seen the Holy Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and it remained on Him. 33) And I did not recognize Him, but He [i.e., God], who sent me to immerse in water, said to me, 'The one on whom you see the

Holy Spirit descending and remaining is the same One who [will] immerse people in the Holy Spirit.' 34) And I have seen and given testimony that this person is the Son of God."

35) Then on the following day John was standing [there] again with two of his disciples. 36) And when he saw Jesus walking by, he said, "Look, [there is] the Lamb of God!" 37) [When] the two disciples heard him say that, they began following Jesus. 38) Then Jesus turned and saw them following [Him] and said to them, "What are you looking for?" And they answered Him, "Rabbi (which means Teacher), where are you staying?" 39) Then He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So, they went and saw where He was staying and they stayed with Him that day. It was about ten o'clock in the morning. [Note: Hour designations in this book are being calculated by Roman time, but this would have been 4 PM if Jewish time were meant].

40) One of the two men who had listened to John and had become a follower of Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41) The first thing Andrew did was to find his own brother Simon and say to him, "We have found the *Messiah* (which means Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one])." 42) So, Andrew brought Simon Peter to Jesus. [And when] Jesus saw him, He said [to him], "You are Simon, the son of John [Note: Peter's father is called Jonah in Matt. 16:17]; you will be called *Cephas* (which means Peter [i.e., "a stone." See Matt. 16:18]).

43) [Then] on the next day He [i.e., Jesus, but some think it refers to Peter or Andrew] decided to travel into Galilee, [and there] He found Philip. Jesus said to Philip, "Become my follower."

44) Now Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew's and Peter's home town. [Note: This town was on the northwest shore of Lake Galilee, a few miles from Capernaum]. 45) [Then] Philip found Nathaniel [i.e., the same as Bartholomew. See Matt. 10:3] and said to him, "We have found Him, the one Moses wrote about in the law; and the prophets [also wrote about Him]. [He is] Jesus from Nazareth, the [step-] son of Joseph." 46) Nathaniel replied to him, "Can anything worthwhile come from Nazareth?" [Note: Nazareth had a bad reputation and Jewish writings made no prediction of a prophet coming from that area. See John 7:52]. Philip answered him, "Come and see."

47) [As] Jesus saw Nathaniel coming toward Him, He said [this] about him, "Look, [there is] a true Israelite, a completely honest man!" 48) Nathaniel asked Jesus, "How did you know me?" Jesus

answered him, "I saw you when you were under that fig tree, [even] before Philip called you." 49) Nathaniel replied to Him, "Rabbi [i.e., Teacher], you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." 50) Jesus said to him, "Do you believe [in me just] because I told you, 'I saw you under that fig tree'? You will see [even] greater things than these [happen]." 51) Then Jesus said to him, "Truly, truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened up and the angels of God going up [from] and coming down on the Son of man." [i.e., probably a reference to angels ministering to Jesus' needs. See Matt. 4:6, 11; Luke 22:43].

CHAPTER TWO

1) Then on the third day [i.e., since Jesus' conversation with Nathaniel. See verse 47], a wedding took place in Cana in Galilee. [Note: This was a small town near Nazareth]. Jesus' mother was there 2) and Jesus and His disciples had been invited to it also. 3) Now when they had run out of wine, Jesus' mother said to Him, "They do not have any more wine [left]." 4) So, Jesus said to her, "[My dear] woman, what do you want me to do [about it]? My time [i.e., to be revealed to people as the Messiah] has not yet come." 5) His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you to do."

6) Now there were six clay water jars there, used by the Jews for ceremonial washings [i.e., for hands, utensils, etc.]. Each one held from 17 to 26 gallons. 7) Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." So, the servants filled them clear full. 8) Then He said to them, "Now pour [some of it] out and take it to the banquet host." So, they took some to him, 9) and when the banquet host tasted the water, which had [now] been turned into wine, he did not know where it had come from. (But the servants who had poured out the water knew [full well]). So, the banquet host called the groom 10) and said to him, "Everyone sets out the best wine first, and when people have had plenty to drink, he then sets out the poor quality [wine]. But you have kept the best wine until now." [Note: See Barnes Notes and The Gospel of John by Butler for evidence suggesting that this was not intoxicating wine].

11) This was the beginning of Jesus' [miraculous] signs, which He performed in Cana in Galilee. [In doing this] He demonstrated His glorious power and His disciples believed in Him.

12) After this incident, Jesus, His mother, His [half-] brothers

and His disciples went down to Capernaum [i.e., located on the north shore of Lake Galilee] and stayed there a few days.

13) Now the Jewish Passover Festival was soon [to be held], so Jesus went up to Jerusalem [to attend it]. 14) There in the Temple [area] He found people selling oxen, sheep and pigeons. [i.e., for use as sacrifices]. Also cashiers were sitting there. [Note: These people exchanged foreign coins so visitors to Jerusalem could make purchases and pay taxes]. 15) Then Jesus made a whip out of strands of rope and drove all of the sheep and oxen out of the Temple [area], dumped out the cashiers' money and overturned their tables. 16) He said to those who were selling the pigeons, "Take these things out of here, and quit making my Father's house [i.e., the Temple] a merchandise mart." 17) Then Jesus' disciples remembered that it was written [Psa. 69:9], "Enthusiasm for Your [i.e., God's] house [i.e., the Temple] will consume me."

18) So, the Jews asked Him, "What [miraculous] sign will you show us, since you are doing these things [i.e., disrupting their merchandising activities]?" 19) Jesus answered them, "[If you] destroy this Temple, I will raise it up in three days." 20) But the Jews said, "It took forty-six years to build this Temple, and are you going to rebuild it in three days?" 21) But Jesus was speaking about the "temple" of His [physical] body. 22) Therefore, when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered what He had said and they believed the Scriptures and the words Jesus had spoken.

23) Now when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people believed in His name [i.e., in Jesus Himself] when they saw the [miraculous] signs He was doing. 24) But Jesus would not trust Himself to them [i.e., to the care of these Jewish leaders] because He knew all men, 25) and He did not need anyone to tell Him about mankind, for He Himself knew what was in the hearts of mankind.

CHAPTER THREE

1) Now there was a Pharisee, a leader of the Jews, named Nicodemus. 2) This man went to Jesus one night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we [i.e., speaking of himself and other Jewish leaders] know that you are a Teacher sent from God, for no one could perform these [miraculous] signs that you are doing unless God were with Him." 3)

Jesus said to him, "Truly, truly, I tell you, a person cannot see the kingdom of God [i.e., enter it. See verse 5], unless he is born from above [Note: The words "from above" are also used in verse 31, but in this place they could also mean "again," or "anew" and refer to the source of a person's second birth]. 4) Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born [again] after he is [already] old? He cannot enter his mother's womb a second time and be born, can he?" 5) Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I tell you, a person cannot enter the kingdom of God unless he is born out of water and the Holy Spirit. 6) Whoever is born from human parents is a human being; and whoever is born from the Holy Spirit is a spiritual being. 7) So, do not be surprised that I have said to you, 'You must be born from above.'" [See note on verse 3]. 8) The wind blows wherever it wants to, and you can hear the sound of it, without knowing where it came from or where it is going. So, it is with everyone who is born from the Holy Spirit." 9) Then Nicodemus asked Jesus, "How can these things happen?" 10) Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of the Israelites and [yet] you do not understand these things? 11) Truly, truly, I tell you, we [i.e., Jesus and His disciples] speak about what we know, and testify about what we have seen, but you do not accept our testimony. 12) If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe [it], how will you believe [it] if I tell you about heavenly things? 13) And no one has gone up to heaven except the One who has come down from heaven, [even] the Son of man. {{Most translations do not contain the added words "who is in heaven"}}. 14) And [just] like Moses lifted up the snake [on the pole] in the wilderness [Num. 21:9], so the Son of man must be lifted up [on the cross] 15) so that whoever believes in Him would have never ending life." [Note: Some translations extend Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus through verse 21].

16) For God loved the world [of sinners] so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that every person who believes in Him would not [have to] be destroyed, but have never ending life. 17) For God did not send His Son into the world to be its judge [i.e., to condemn it], but [rather] so that the people of the world could be saved [from condemnation] through Him. 18) The person who believes in Him will not be condemned, but the one who does not believe in Him has already been condemned, because he did not believe in the name of God's one and only Son. 19) Now this is [how God's] judgment [works]: The Light [See 1:5-9] has come into the world, but people loved darkness [i.e., sin] rather than the Light,

because their deeds were evil. **20)** For every person who practices evil things hates the light [of truth] and does not come to it, for fear of having his deeds exposed [as sinful]. **21)** But the person who does what is [according to the] truth [i.e., good things] comes to the light so that his deeds may be shown to have been produced by God.

22) After this Jesus and His disciples went to the country-[side] of Judea and there they remained and immersed people. **23)** John [the Immerser] was also immersing people in Aenon, near Salem [Note: These locations are thought to have been in northeastern Judea, near the Jordan River], because there was a lot of water there; so people were coming to be immersed. **24)** Now John had not yet been thrown into prison. **25)** [About then] a dispute arose between John's disciples and a Jew over ceremonial cleansing. **26)** These disciples went to John and said to him, "Rabbi, look, that man who was with you on the east side of the Jordan River [i.e., Jesus], whom you testified about, is immersing people and everyone is going to him." [Note: Actually, it was Jesus' disciples who did the immersing. See 4:2]. **27)** John replied to them, "A person cannot receive anything, unless it has been given to him from [God in] heaven. **28)** You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one] but [rather] that I was sent [by God] ahead of Him.' **29)** The one who has the bride is the groom; but the best man, who stands up with him and listens to him [take his vows], is very happy when he hears him speak. So, [now] my joy is complete [i.e. over hearing about Jesus' ministry]. **30)** He [i.e., Jesus] must increase [in importance and influence], while I must decrease."

31) The One who comes from above [i.e., Jesus] ranks over all [others]; but the one who is out of the earth [i.e., of human origin] is [merely] an earthly [being] and he speaks in earthly [ways]. [But] the One who comes from heaven [i.e., Jesus] ranks over all [others]. **32)** He testifies concerning what He has seen and heard, but no one accepts His testimony. **33)** The person who has accepted Jesus' testimony has confirmed this [fact], that God is truthful. **34)** For the One whom God has sent [i.e., Jesus] speaks the words of God, for He [i.e., God] does not give the Holy Spirit in a limited quantity [i.e., to Jesus. See next verse]. **35)** The Father loves the Son and has given everything into His hands [See Eph. 1:20-22]. **36)** The person who believes in the Son has never ending life, but the person who disobeys the Son will not see life [i.e., will not experience never ending life], but [instead], God's wrath remains on him.

CHAPTER FOUR

1) Therefore, when the Lord [Jesus] knew that the Pharisees were aware of Him making and immersing more disciples than John, 2)-3) He left Judea and returned to Galilee. (Although it was actually His disciples who did the immersing and not Jesus Himself). 4) [Now to get to Galilee] it required that Jesus travel through Samaria [Note: Samaria was the next country north of Judea].

5) So, He arrived at the Samaritan town called Sychar, which was near the piece of property that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6) Jacob's [spring-fed] well was there so Jesus, tired from His [long] journey, sat down beside the well just as He was [i.e., before doing anything else]. It was about six o'clock in the morning, [Note: This would have been 12 noon if Jewish time were meant].

7) [About then] a Samaritan woman came [to the well] to draw water. Jesus said to her, "[Please] give me a drink." 8) (Now Jesus' disciples had gone away to town to buy some food). 9) Therefore, the Samaritan woman asked Him, "Why is it that you, being a Jew, would ask a Samaritan woman [like me] for a drink?" (For Jews do not have any fellowship with Samaritans). [Note: The reason for this stemmed from longstanding religious, cultural and ethnic prejudices]. 10) Jesus answered her, "If you [only] knew the [real] gift of God, and who it is that said to you, '[Please], give me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." 11) The woman [then] said to Him, "Sir, you do not have anything to draw [water] with, and the well is deep. Where will you get that living water? 12) Are you greater than our forefather Jacob, who gave us this well? He himself and his sons and cattle [all] drank from it." 13) Jesus answered her, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again, 14) but whoever drinks the water I give him will never get thirsty [again]. For the water I will give him will become in him [i.e., in his spirit] a spring of water, bubbling up and producing never ending life." [See John 7:38]. 15) The woman [then] said to Him, "Sir, [please] give me [some of] that water, so that I do not get thirsty [again], or have to come all the way here to draw [water]." 16) Jesus replied to her, "Go call your husband and [then] come here." 17) The woman said to Him, "I do not have a husband." Jesus said to her, "You were right when you said, 'I do not have a husband,' 18)

because you have had five husbands, and the man you are now living with is not [really] your husband. So, you have told the truth." 19) [Then] the woman said to Jesus, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20) Our forefathers worshiped on this mountain [i.e., Mt. Gerizim, which was visible from where they were sitting]; but you say that Jerusalem is the place where people should worship [God]." 21) Jesus replied to her, "[My dear] woman, believe me [when I tell you], the time will come when you people will not worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22) You [Samaritans] do not [really] know what you worship; we [Jews] know what we worship because salvation is from the Jews [i.e., through Jewish prophets, Jewish Scriptures and a Jewish Messiah]. 23) But the time will come, and is now [actually] here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit [i.e., from the heart] and truth [i.e., according to God's revealed will], for these are the people whom the Father seeks to be His worshipers. 24) God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." 25) [Then] the woman said to Jesus, "I know that Messiah is coming ([He is] the One who is called Christ). And when He does come, He will tell us everything." 26) Jesus replied to her, "I, who am speaking to you, am [the Messiah]."

27) Just about then Jesus' disciples returned [from town], and were surprised to find Him talking with a woman. [Note: It was not customary for a Jewish male to engage a woman in extended conversation in that day, much less a stranger, and certainly not a Samaritan], yet no one said [to Him], "What are you looking for?" or "Why are you talking to her?" 28) So, the woman left her water jar and went back into town and told the people [there], 29) "Come [and] see a man who told me everything I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" 30) [So], the people went out from the town and came to where Jesus was.

31) Meanwhile Jesus' disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, [have something to] eat." 32) But He said to them, "I [already] have food to eat that you do not know about." 33) So, the disciples said to one another, "No one has brought Him anything to eat [have they]?" 34) Jesus answered them, "My food is doing what God, who sent me, wants me to, and accomplishing His work. 35) Are you not [always] saying, 'There are still four months before harvest time comes'? Look, I am telling you [disciples], lift up your eyes and look at the fields, that they are white and ripe for harvest [i.e., people are ready to make a spiritual response]. 36) Already the person who is harvesting [the

crop] is being paid for his work, and is gathering a crop for never ending life, so that the one planting and the one harvesting [the crop] may rejoice together. 37) So, the saying is true that one person plants and another harvests [the crop]. 38) I sent you [disciples] to harvest [a crop] that you did not work on; other people have done the work and you have reaped the results of their work." [Note: This is probably an allusion to the preliminary work of preaching done by John, the Immerser, with results occurring under the preaching of the apostles].

39) Then many Samaritans from Sychar believed in Jesus because of the testimony of the woman, who said, "He told me everything that I ever did." 40) When the Samaritans came to Him, they urged Jesus to stay with them, so He remained there for two days. 41) And many more people believed [in Jesus] because of His [own] words, 42) and they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not just because of what you said, but because we have heard [it] for ourselves and know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

43) Two days later Jesus left Sychar and went to Galilee. 44) For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet does not receive honor in his own country. [Note: Jesus' reference here to his "own country" means Judea, while in Matt., Mark and Luke it refers to Nazareth]. 45) So, when He got to Galilee, the people there welcomed Him, for they had also gone to the [Passover] Festival in Jerusalem and had seen everything He had done there during the festival.

46) Then Jesus returned again to Cana, in Galilee, where He had turned water into wine. There was a government official there whose son was sick at Capernaum [Note: Capernaum was about 20 miles away from Cana]. 47) When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to Him and begged Him to come down [to Capernaum] and heal his son who was about to die. 48) So, Jesus said to him, "None of you people will believe [in me] unless you see [miraculous] signs and wonders, [will you?]." 49) The government official replied, "Sir, [please] come down [to Capernaum] before my child dies." 50) Jesus said to him, "Go on [home]; your son will live." And the man believed what Jesus said to him and went [home].

51) While he was going along, his slaves met him and told him that his son was [still] alive. 52) Then he asked them what the [exact] time was when his son began to get better. They said to him, "[It was] yesterday at seven o'clock in the morning that the fever left him." [Note: This would have been 1 PM, if Jewish time were meant]. 53) So [then],

the father realized that it was at that [exact] hour that Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So, he and his entire family believed [in Jesus].

54) [Now] this was the second [miraculous] sign that Jesus performed after going from Judea to Galilee.

CHAPTER FIVE

1) After these things Jesus went up to Jerusalem to [attend] a Jewish festival.

2) Now in Jerusalem there was a pool of water near the Sheep Gate [Note: This was a city gate in the north wall]. It had five porticos [i.e., covered open areas along the outside of the Temple]. In the Hebrew language it was called *Bethesda*. 3) Under these porticos a large number of sick, blind, crippled and deformed people were placed { {A few ancient authorities add "to wait for the water [of the pool] to become choppy. 4) For an angel of the Lord came down to the pool [from heaven] at certain times and stirred up the water. Then the first person to enter the pool after the water became choppy was healed from whatever disease he had} }. 5) And a certain man was there who had been sick for thirty-eight years [Note: He was probably a crippled person]. 6) When Jesus saw him lying [there by the pool], and knew that he had been [in that condition] a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to get well?" 7) The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I do not have anyone to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but [just] when I am about to enter [it] someone else goes down [into the water] before me." 8) [So], Jesus said to him, "Get up; pick up your cot and walk." 9) And immediately the man was made well and picked up his cot and walked.

Now this happened on the Sabbath day. 10) So, the Jews said to the man who was healed, "It is not permissible for you to pick up your cot because it is the Sabbath day." 11) But he replied to them, "The same man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your cot and walk.'" 12) [Then] they asked him, "Who is this man who said to you, 'Pick up your cot and walk.?' " 13) But the man who was healed did not know who it was, because Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

14) Later on Jesus found the man in the Temple, and said to

him, "Look, you have been made well; stop sinning or else something worse [i.e., than the handicap you had] will happen to you." 15) [Then] the man left and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

16) So, for this reason the Jews began persecuting Jesus, because He did these [kinds of] things on the Sabbath day. 17) But Jesus said to them, "My Father is continuing to work and I am working." 18) So, for this reason the Jews looked for more [opportunities] to kill Him, because He not only broke Sabbath day [restrictions], but also He had called God His own Father, [thereby] making Himself equal with God.

19) So, Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, the Son [of God] cannot do anything on His own [i.e., independently of the Father]; but [He does] what He sees His Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son also does as well. 20) For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him everything that He Himself does; and He will show Him [even] greater deeds [i.e., more extensive in scope] than these [i.e., than merely healing a crippled man], so that you people will be amazed. 21) For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them [renewed] life [for their bodies ?], even so the Son also gives [renewed] life to [the spirits ?] of whoever He wants to. 22) For the Father does not judge anyone, but He has given [full responsibility for] judging people to His Son, 23) so that everyone will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. The person who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

24) "Truly, truly, I tell you, the person who listens to my message and believes [in] the One who sent me [i.e., God] has never ending life [i.e., as a hope. See Titus 1:2; 3:7]. He will not be judged [and condemned], but has [already] passed from being [spiritually] dead to being [spiritually] alive. 25) Truly, truly, I tell you, the time is coming, and is now [actually] here, when those who are [spiritually] dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear [i.e., and heed His message] will have [spiritual] life. 26) For [just] as the Father is Himself [the source of] life, in the same way He gave to His Son also [the power] to be [the source of] life. 27) And He gave His Son authority to carry out judgment [upon mankind] because He is the Son of man [Note: The Greek actually says "a son of man"].

28) "Do not be surprised at this: The time is coming when all

those who are in their graves will hear His voice 29) and they will come out [i.e., in the general resurrection on the last day]. Those who had done what was good will be raised [from the dead] to [never ending] life; and those who had done what was evil will be raised [from the dead] to judgment [i.e., to be condemned].

30) "I cannot do anything by my own [authority]. I judge [people] based on what I hear [i.e., from the Father] and my judgement [of them] is just, because I do not look for what I want [to do], but for what He who sent me [i.e., God] wants. 31) If I testify about myself, my testimony is not [considered] true. 32) [But] there is Someone else [i.e., God] who testifies about me, and I know that the testimony He gives about me is true.

33) "You people have sent to John [the Immerser, for information. See 1:19] and he has given true testimony [about me]. 34) But I do not rely on the testimony of men about me; therefore I tell you these things so you will be saved [i.e., from condemning judgment. See verse 29]. 35) John was the lamp that was burning and glowing and you people were willing to enjoy the light that he projected for awhile. 36) But my testimony is greater than John's. For the deeds the Father has given me to complete, the very deeds I do, testify about me, that the Father has sent me. 37) And the Father who sent me testifies concerning me. You people have never heard His voice nor seen His form. 38) And you do not keep His message living in your [hearts], for you do not believe [in] the One whom God sent [i.e., in Jesus]. 39) You search through the Scriptures [i.e., the Old Testament], because you think that you will [learn how to] have never ending life by [reading] them. And these Scriptures are what testify concerning me. 40) But you do not want to come to me [i.e., to believe in me. See verse 38] so that you will have [never ending] life.

41) "I do not accept honor from mankind, 42) but I know you [well enough], that you do not have a love for God within you. 43) I have come in my Father's name [i.e., by His authority] and you do not accept me. If someone else comes in his own name [i.e., by his own authority], you will accept him. 44) How can you believe [in me] when you [offer and] accept honors from one another, but do not try to obtain the honor that comes from the only God?

45) "Do not think that I will accuse you [of wrongdoing] before the Father; Moses, on whom you have set your hope [i.e., you base your acceptance with God on the promises found in Moses'

writings], he is the one who accuses you [i.e., in his writings]. 46) For if you believed Moses' [writings], you would [also] believe in me, for he wrote about me. [See Deut. 18:15-19]. 47) But if you do not believe his writings, how do you expect to believe my message?"

CHAPTER SIX

1) After these things happened Jesus went across to the east side of Lake Galilee, also called Lake Tiberias. [Note: This lake also bore a name honoring the Roman Emperor Tiberias]. 2) And a large crowd followed Him because they had seen the [miraculous] signs He had performed on sick people. 3) Then Jesus went up to a high plateau [Note: This place, northeast of Lake Galilee, is called "The Golan Heights," today] and sat down there with His disciples.

4) Now the time for the Jewish Passover Festival was getting close. 5) So Jesus, looking up and seeing a large crowd coming to Him, said to Philip [Note: He was one of the apostles, whose home town was at nearby Bethsaida. See 1:44], "Where are we going to buy [enough] bread, so that this crowd can eat?" 6) Now He said this to test Philip, for He [already] knew what He was going to do. 7) Philip answered Him, "Not even two hundred coins' worth of bread would be enough to feed them if everyone ate only a little bit." [Note: The amount here indicated was two hundred days of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$14,000 in 1994].

8) [Then] one of His disciples, named Andrew, [who was] Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, 9) "There is a little boy here who has five [small] loaves of barley bread and two [probably smoked] fish. But what is this amount for [feeding] so many people?" 10) Jesus answered, "Have these people recline [on the ground]." Now there was a lot of grass in that place. So, the men, numbering about five thousand, reclined [on the grass]. 11) Then Jesus took the loaves of bread, and [after] giving thanks [to God], He distributed [pieces] to those who were reclining. He did the same thing with the fish, [giving them] as much as they wanted.

12) And when the people were [all] full, Jesus said to His disciples, "Gather up the broken pieces that are left over so that nothing is wasted." 13) So, they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces left over from the five loaves of barley bread which they had eaten.

14) So, when the people saw the [miraculous] sign that Jesus had performed [i.e., the feeding of the large crowd with such a small amount of food], they said, "Truly, this is the prophet who was to come into the world." [Note: This was probably a reference to the promise made in Deut. 18:15-19]. **15)** So, [when] Jesus knew that the people were about to come and forcibly take Him and make Him [their] king, He left there again and went to the high plateau [to be] alone [i.e., to pray. See Mark 6:46].

16) Then when evening came, His disciples went down to the lake **17)** and got into their boat, and were crossing over [i.e., to the west side of] the lake toward Capernaum. It was dark by now and Jesus had not yet come to them. **18)** Then the water became choppy because of a strong wind that had begun to blow. **19)** And when the disciples had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the [surface of the] water. They became afraid as Jesus got closer to their boat. **20)** But He said to them, "Do not be afraid; it is I." **21)** So, they eagerly took Him into their boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading [i.e., to Capernaum, on the northwest side of the lake].

22) On the next day the crowd that had stayed on the other [i.e., east] side of the lake realized that there had been only one boat there. They [also] knew that Jesus was not aboard the boat when it left with the disciples in it, but that they had left without Him. **23)** (However, meanwhile, some other [small] boats had come from Tiberias [i.e., a small town on the west side of the lake] near where they had eaten bread after the Lord had given thanks). **24)** So, when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor His disciples were there [i.e., on the east side] they got into the [small] boats and sailed [west] to Capernaum, looking for Jesus.

25) And when they found Him on the other [i.e., west] side, they said to Him, "Rabbi, how did you get here?" **26)** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, you people are looking for me because you got to eat the loaves of bread and were satisfied and not because you saw [miraculous] signs. [See verse 14]. **27)** Do not work for the [kind of] food that spoils, but for the kind that lasts until never ending life. The Son of Man will give you this [kind of food], for God the Father has placed His seal [of approval] on Him." **28)** Then the people said to Jesus, "What must we do in order to perform the deeds that God requires?" **29)** Jesus answered them, "This is the deed that

God requires: You should believe in Him whom God has sent [i.e., in Jesus]." 30) And they said to Him, "What kind of a [miraculous] sign will you perform so that we can see it and [then] believe [in] you? What [kind of] deed will you perform? 31) Our forefathers ate the [supernatural] 'manna' in the desert, as it is written [Neh. 9:15], 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32) So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, it was not [really] Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who is [now] giving you the real bread from heaven. 33) For the bread God gives is the One [see verse 35] who comes down from heaven, and [He] gives [spiritual] life to the world." 34) Then they said to Him, "Sir, [please] give us this bread all the time."

35) Jesus replied, "I am the bread who gives [spiritual] life; the person who comes to me will never get hungry [again], and the one who believes in me will never get thirsty [again]. 36) But I have told you this: You have seen me and yet do not believe [in me]. 37) Every person [Note: The Greek says, "every thing"] whom the Father gives me will [eventually] come to me [i.e., for salvation]; and I will never turn away that person who comes to me. 38) For I have come down from heaven to do what God, who sent me, wants me to do, not what I want to do. 39) And this is what God, who sent me, wants: That I should not lose any of those persons whom He has given me, but should raise them up [from the dead] on the last day [i.e., the judgment day]. 40) And this is what [else] my Father wants: That every person who sees the Son [i.e., with the eye of faith] and believes in Him should have never ending life, and I will raise him up [from the dead] on the last day."

41) So the Jews, [who were assembled in the synagogue. See verse 59] began complaining about Jesus because He had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42) And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" 43) Jesus answered them, "Stop complaining among yourselves. 44) No one can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, attracts him to me. [See verse 65]. And I will raise him up [from the dead] on the last day. 45) It is written in the prophets [Isa. 54:13], 'And they will all be taught by God.' [So], every person who has heard the Father and learned [from Him] will come to me. 46) [I am] not [saying] that anyone has [ever] seen the Father, except the One who is from God

[i.e., Jesus] has seen Him. 47) Truly, truly, I tell you, the person who believes [in me] has never ending life. [See note on 5:24]. 48) I am the bread of life. 49) Your forefathers ate the 'manna' in the desert and died. 50) [But] this is the bread that has come down from heaven [i.e., Jesus is referring to Himself], so that a person who eats of it [i.e., believes in Jesus] will not die [spiritually]. 51) I am the living bread who came down from heaven; if anyone eats this bread, he will live forever. Yes, and the bread that I will give [him] is my physical body, [so] that the world can have [never ending] life."

52) Then the Jews [who were assembled in the synagogue. See verse 59] began arguing bitterly with one another, saying, "How can this man give us his physical body to eat?" 53) So, Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, unless you eat the physical body of the Son of man and drink His blood, you do not have [spiritual] life in yourselves [Note: The references to "body" and "blood" throughout this section allude to taking Jesus' life and teaching into one's heart. See verse 56]. 54) The person who eats my physical body and drinks my blood has never ending life [See note on 5:24], and I will raise him up [from the dead] on the last day [i.e., the judgment day]. 55) For my physical body is real food and my blood is [the] real drink. 56) The person who eats my physical body and drinks my blood lives in me and I [live] in him. 57) Just as the living Father has sent me, and I have [physical and spiritual] life because of the Father, so the person who eats me will also have [physical? and spiritual] life because of me. 58) This is the bread that came down from heaven [i.e., Jesus is referring to Himself]. [It is] not like [the bread] our forefathers ate and [then] died. The person who eats this bread will live forever." 59) Jesus said these things in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

60) So, when they heard [these things], many of Jesus' disciples said, "This is difficult teaching. Who can listen to it [i.e., and accept it]?"

61) But Jesus, knowing within Himself that His disciples were complaining about His teaching, said to them, "Does this [teaching] bother you? 62) Then what if you were to see the Son of man going up [i.e., to heaven] where He was before? 63) It is the Holy Spirit who [Note: The Greek word here is "that" instead of "who"] gives life [i.e., an understanding the spiritual nature of Jesus' teaching can produce spiritual life]; the flesh is of no value [i.e., an understanding Jesus' teaching only in a physical sense makes it worthless]. The

words I have spoken to you are [from the] Holy Spirit and [they give] life. 64) But there are some of you who do not believe [in me]." For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones would not believe [in Him] and which one would turn Him over [i.e., to the Jewish authorities]. 65) Then He said, "This is the reason I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father gives him [the opportunity. See verse 44]."

66) Upon [hearing] this, many of Jesus' disciples turned back and refused to accompany Him anymore. [Note: They deserted Jesus physically as well as spiritually]. 67) Therefore, Jesus said to the twelve apostles, "Do you not want to go [with me] either?" 68) Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, who [else] could we go to? You have the message about never ending life. 69) And we apostles have believed [in you] and know that you are God's Holy One." 70) Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose [all] twelve of you, and one of you is a devil?" [Note: The word "devil" means "adversary" or "opponent"]. 71) Now He was speaking about Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he was the one, out of the twelve, who was [soon] going to turn Jesus over [to the Jewish authorities].

CHAPTER SEVEN

1) Then after these things happened, Jesus traveled in Galilee [only], for He did not want to move around in Judea because the Jews [there] were trying to kill Him. 2) Now it was almost time for the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles [Note: This was also called "Festival of Shelters," and was one of three principal, annual Jewish festivals and commemorated the occasion of the Israelites living in tents or shelters during their forty year wandering in the desert]. 3) Then Jesus' [half-] brothers said to Him, "You should leave here and go to Judea so your disciples [there] can see the [supernatural] deeds you are performing. 4) For no one does things secretly if he wants to become known publicly. Since you are doing such things, show yourself to the world." 5) For even Jesus' [half-] brothers did not believe in Him [i.e., at that time].

6) So, Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come [i.e., to be revealed to the world as its Savior], but it is always your time [i.e., they could go to the festival anytime without rousing opposition]. 7) The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about its deeds, that they are evil. 8) You men go [on] up to the festival, but I am not going up yet [Note: Although "yet" appears in only a few manuscripts, it seems

to be the proper idea here], because my time has not yet come. [See verse 6].
9) Then after saying these things, Jesus remained in Galilee [i.e., for awhile longer. See next verse].

10) But after His [half-] brothers had gone up to the Festival, Jesus also went up, but secretly instead of openly. **11)** So, the Jews [i.e., their authorities] began searching for Him at the Festival, and were saying, "Where is he?"

12) And there was much whispering about Him among the crowds. Some were saying, "He is a good man," [but] others said, "No [he is not], he is [just] deceiving the crowd." **13)** However, no one said anything about Him openly for fear of the Jews.

14) But when the Festival was about half over, Jesus went up into the Temple and began teaching. **15)** Now the Jewish authorities were amazed, saying, "How can this man know so much, since he is never been educated?" **16)** So, Jesus answered them, "What I am teaching is not mine, but [it belongs] to Him who sent me [i.e., to God]. **17)** If anyone [really] desires to do what God wants, he will know whether my teaching comes from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority [only]. **18)** The person who speaks on his own authority is [just] trying to gain honor for himself. But the One who tries to gain honor from God, who sent Him, is [committed to] truth, and there is nothing false in His heart. **19)** Did not Moses give you the law, and yet not one of you is obeying it? Why are you trying to kill me?" **20)** [Someone from] the crowd answered, "You have an evil spirit [in you]; who is trying to kill you?" **21)** Jesus answered them, "I performed one [miraculous] deed and you were all amazed by it [i.e., the healing of the crippled man on the Sabbath day. See 5:1-9]. **22)** [Now] Moses gave you [the ordinance of] circumcision and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath day. (Although it was [first] required by [your] forefathers, and not Moses). **23)** If a person is circumcised on a Sabbath day so that the law of Moses can be observed [properly, then why] are you upset with me for restoring a person to complete health on a Sabbath day? **24)** Do not make judgments based [merely] on how things look, but make judgments on how they really are."

25) Some of the people of Jerusalem said [about Jesus], "Is not this person the one they are trying to kill? **26)** And look, he is speaking openly and they are not saying anything to him [about it]. Can it be that the [Jewish] authorities know that he really is the

Messiah [i.e., the Christ, God's specially chosen one]? 27) However, we know where this man comes from, but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from."

28) As Jesus was teaching in the Temple, He spoke out, and said, "You people [think you] know who I am and where I come from. I have not come on my own authority, but God, who sent me, is true and you do not know Him. 29) I know Him because I came from Him, for He sent me."

30) Then they [i.e., the authorities] tried to arrest Jesus, but no one laid a hand on Him because His time had not yet come. 31) But many people in the crowd believed in Him, saying, "When the Messiah does come, will he perform more [miraculous] signs than this man has done?"

32) The Pharisees [i.e., a strict sect of the Jewish religion] heard the crowd whispering these things about Him, so the leading priests and Pharisees sent some Temple guards to arrest Him. 33) Therefore, Jesus said, "I will be with you for a little while longer, then I will go to the Father who sent me. 34) You people will be looking for me, but you will not find me; and you will not be able to go where I will be." 35) The Jews [i.e., the authorities] were saying among themselves, "Where will this man go that we will not be able to find him? Will he go where the Jewish people are scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? 36) What did he mean by saying, 'You people will be looking for me, but will not find me; and you will not be able to go where I will be?'"

37) Now on the last and greatest day of the Festival [of Tabernacles], Jesus stood up and spoke out, "If anyone is thirsty he should come to me for a drink. 38) As the Scripture has recorded [Note: The following is not an exact quotation from the OT, but echoes Isa. 58:11 and Zech. 14:8], 'Streams of life-giving water will flow from the person's heart who believes in me.'" 39) Now He said this about the Holy Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive. [See Acts 2:38]. For [at that time] the Holy Spirit had not yet been given, since Jesus had not yet received splendor [in heaven]. 40) When they heard these words some people in the crowd said, "Truly, this man is the prophet." [See note on 1:21]. 41) Others said, "He is the Christ." But [still] others said, "What [do you mean]? The Christ will not come from Galilee, [will he]? 42) Does not Scripture say [Micah 5:2] that the Christ will come as the descendant of King David, and from Bethlehem, the town

where David lived?" 43) So, a division arose among people in the crowd over Jesus. 44) Some of them wanted to arrest Him, but no one [attempted to] lay a hand on Him.

45) So, [when] the Temple guards [See verse 32] returned to the leading priests and Pharisees, they were asked, "Why did you not bring Jesus here?" 46) The guards answered, "No one has ever spoken like this man." 47) The Pharisees replied, "Are you being led astray, too? 48) Have any of the authorities or Pharisees believed in him? 49) But this crowd does not know the law of Moses, [and especially its oral traditions], [and so] are cursed [by God]."

50) [Now] Nicodemus (being a leading Pharisee, and the one who went to talk to Jesus one night), said to them, 51) "Does our law pass judgment on a man before first hearing from him and learning what he did?" 52) They answered him, "Are you from Galilee, too? Search [the Scriptures], and you will see that no prophet will come from Galilee." [Note: They were probably referring to "the prophet" predicted to come by Moses. Deut. 18:15].

{ {Most ancient manuscripts do not contain the section from 7:53 through 8:11, or else place it elsewhere in the book} }. 53) Then everyone went home,

CHAPTER EIGHT

1) but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. [Note: This was located on a slope just east of Jerusalem]. 2) Then early [the next] morning Jesus went into the Temple again. All the people gathered around Him and He sat down and began teaching them. 3) Some experts in the law of Moses and Pharisees brought [to Him] a woman who had been caught committing an immoral sexual act and stood her in the middle of the group. 4) They said to Jesus, "This woman was caught in the very act of sexual immorality. 5) Now in the law, Moses required us to stone such people [to death], so what do you say [should be done with her]?" 6) They said this to test Him, in order to have a charge to bring against Him.

But Jesus stooped down and wrote [something] on the ground [i.e., in the dirt] with His finger. 7) But when they continued asking Him [about the woman], He stood up and said to them, "That person among you who has never sinned should be the first one to throw a

stone at her." 8) Then He stooped down again and wrote [something else] on the ground.

9) And when they heard [what He had said], they [all] left, one at a time, beginning with the oldest men. So, Jesus was left alone with the woman [still standing] there where she was. 10) So, Jesus stood up [again] and said to her, "[My dear] woman, where are the men? Did not any of them [stay to] condemn you?" 11) She replied, "No sir, no one did." Then Jesus said, "[Well], I do not condemn you either. Go on your way and from now on, do not sin anymore." } }

12) So, Jesus spoke to them again [i.e., to the Jewish authorities. See 7:45], saying, "I am the light of the world. The person who becomes my follower will never live in [spiritual] darkness, but have light [for his] life [i.e., followers of Jesus will not live in error and sin but in truth and righteousness]." 13) The Pharisees then said to Him, "[Since] you are giving testimony about yourself, your testimony is not true." 14) Jesus replied to them, "Even if I do give testimony about myself, it is [still] true, because I know where I came from and where I am going. But you people do not know where I came from or where I am going. 15) You pass judgment according to human standards; I do not judge anyone [i.e., the way you do it]. 16) And even if I do pass judgment, my judgment is true because I am not alone, for the Father who sent me is with me. 17) Even in your law it is written [Deut. 19:15] that the testimony of two people is true. 18) I am one who gives testimony about myself, and the Father who sent me [is the second witness who] testifies about me."

19) So, the Jewish authorities said to Him, "Where is your father?" Jesus answered, "You people do not know me or my Father. If you [did] know me, you would know my Father also." 20) Jesus spoke these words in the treasury [area of the Temple]. And no one arrested Him because His time had not yet come [i.e., to be turned over to the authorities and killed].

21) Jesus again said to them, "I am going away and you will look for me, but you will die [condemned] in your sins. You cannot go where I am going." 22) So, the Jews asked [one another], "Will he kill himself, because he said, 'You cannot go where I am going'?" 23) Jesus replied, "You people are from below [i.e., from the earthly realm]; I am from above [i.e., from the heavenly realm]. You belong to this world; I do not belong to this world. 24) Therefore I said to you that you will die [condemned] in your sins. For unless you

believe that I am [the Messiah, who came from above. See verse 23], you will die [condemned] in your sins." 25) So, they said to Him, "Who are you?" Jesus answered, "Why am I even speaking to you at all?" [Note: The Greek words of this difficult passage are not real clear.] 26) I have many things to say about you and [many] judgments to pass on you. However, God, who sent me, is truthful and I am telling the world [only] the things I have heard from Him."

27) The people [who heard this] did not understand that Jesus was speaking to them about the Father. 28) So, Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of man [i.e., to crucify Him], then you will know that I am [the Messiah] and that I do not do anything on my own authority, but I speak [only] those things that the Father has taught me. 29) And God, who sent me, is with me; He has not left me alone, because I always do what is pleasing to Him." 30) When He said these things, many people believed in Him.

31) Then Jesus said to those Jews who had believed [in Him], "If you people continue [obeying] my message, then you are truly my disciples. 32) And you will know what the truth is and the truth will set you free [i.e. from bondage to sin]." 33) They replied to Him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be set free'?" 34) Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. 35) Now the slave does not remain part of the family forever, [but] the son does. 36) Therefore, if the Son sets you free [from sin], you will be truly free. 37) I know that you people are [all] descendants of Abraham; yet you are trying to kill me because you will not allow my message to affect you. 38) I am telling [you] about what I have seen in my Father's presence; but you [should] do what you have heard from your father." 39) They answered Him, "Our forefather was Abraham." Jesus replied to them, "If you were Abraham's descendants, you would do the [kinds of] deeds that Abraham did. 40) But instead, you are trying to kill me, a man who has [only] told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this [kind of thing]. 41) You people are doing what your father does." They said to Him, "We were not born illegitimately; the only Father we have is God." 42) Jesus replied, "If God were [truly] your Father you would love me, because I came from God to be here. For I did not come on my own authority, but God sent me. 43) Why do you people not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot [bear to] listen

to my message. **44)** You belong to your father the devil, and you are [always] wanting to do what your father desires. He was a murderer from the [very] beginning [Note: This is probably a reference to Satan's influence on Adam, Eve and Cain in the Garden of Eden] and does not stand for the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he only speaks what is part of his nature, because he is a liar and the father of [all] liars. **45)** But because I tell [you] the truth, you do not believe me. **46)** Which one of you can prove me guilty of sinning? If I tell you the truth, why do you not believe me? **47)** The person who belongs to God listens to the message from God. The reason you will not listen to it is because you do not belong to God."

48) The Jews answered and said to Jesus, "Were we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan [See note on 4:9], and are dominated by an evil spirit?" **49)** Jesus answered, "I am not dominated by an evil spirit. But I give honor to my Father and you people dishonor me. **50)** I am not looking for personal honor; but there is One who is looking for it [i.e., God], and He judges people [fairly]. **51)** Truly, truly, I tell you, if a person obeys my message, he will never die [i.e., spiritually]."

52) The Jews [i.e., the authorities] replied, "Now we know that you are dominated by an evil spirit. Abraham and the prophets [all] died and [yet] you are saying, 'If a person obeys my message, he will never experience death.' **53)** Are you greater [i.e., more important] than our forefather Abraham and the prophets, who [all] died? Who do you think you are?" **54)** Jesus answered them, "If I were to honor myself, that honor would be worthless. [But] it is my Father who honors me [and] you say He is your God. **55)** Now you people have not known Him [i.e., to be your Lord], but I know Him. And if I should say, 'I do not know Him,' I would be a liar like you. But I [do] know Him, and I obey His message. **56)** Your forefather Abraham was glad that he could look forward to my day [i.e., by faith he anticipated the coming of the Messiah. See Heb. 11:13ff]. And he saw it [by faith] and was glad." **57)** So, the Jews said to Him, "You are not even fifty years old [yet] and have you seen Abraham?" **58)** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, before Abraham was born, I am." [Note: The words "I am" were probably construed as a reference to being Deity. See Ex. 3:14]. **59)** So, they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself [or "was hidden," suggesting a miraculous departure] and left the Temple [area].

CHAPTER NINE

1) As Jesus was walking along He saw a man [who had been] blind from birth. 2) His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, did this man sin or was it his parents' [sin] that caused him to be born blind?" 3) Jesus answered, "[It was] neither his sin nor his parents' [sin], but [it happened] so that the deeds of God could be seen in his life. 4) While it is still daytime we must perform the acts of God, who sent me. Nighttime is coming, when no one can act. 5) While I am in the world I am the light of the world."

6) After He had said this, He spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then He put the mud on the man's eyes 7) and said to him, "[Now] go and wash in the pool of Siloam (which means 'sent')." So, the man left and washed [in the pool], and [when he] returned, [he was] able to see.

8) Then the neighbors, who had seen the man begging previously, said, "Is not this the man who [used to] sit there and beg?" 9) Other people said, "[Yes], that is him," while [still] others said, "No, [it is not]; he [just] looks like him." The man said, "I am the one, [all right]." 10) So, they said to him, "How was your sight restored, then?" 11) He answered, "That man called Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes; then He said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash [yourself]'. So, I went and washed and my sight was [miraculously] restored." 12) Then the people said to the man, "Where is he?" "I do not know," he replied.

13) [So], they brought the man, who had been blind, to the Pharisees. 14) Now it was the Sabbath day when Jesus had made the mud and restored the man's sight. 15) So, the Pharisees also asked him again how his sight was restored. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes; I washed [myself], and [now] I can see." 16) Some of the Pharisees then said, "The man who did this is not from God, because he does not observe the Sabbath day. But other people said, "How could a man who is a sinner do such [miraculous] signs?" And the people were divided among themselves [over the issue]. 17) So, they said to the [former] blind man again, "What do you have to say about the man, since [you say] he restored your sight?" The man replied, "He is a prophet." 18) But these Jews [i.e., Pharisees] did not believe that the man had been blind and had received his sight back until they

called his parents **19)** and asked them, "Is this your son, whom you say was born blind? How [is it] then, that he can now see?" **20)** His parents answered, "We know this is our son and that he was born blind. **21)** But as to how it is that he can now see, we do not know; and we do not know who restored his sight [either]. Ask him, for he is old enough and can answer for himself." **22)** His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities who had already decided that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Christ would be expelled from the synagogue. **23)** So, his parents said, "He is old enough, ask him."

24) So, they called the [former] blind man a second time, and said to him, "Give honor to God [Note: In Jewish idiom this phrase meant "Tell the truth." See Josh. 7:19]; we know this man is a sinner." **25)** So, he answered, "I do not know if he is a sinner or not. But one thing I do know; I used to be blind, but now I can see." **26)** The Pharisees said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he restore your sight?" **27)** He answered them, "I just told you, but you would not listen. Why should I tell you again? Do you men want to become his disciples, too?" **28)** Then they began ridiculing him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. **29)** We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we do not [even] know where he came from." **30)** The man replied, "Is not that strange! You do not know where he came from and yet he restored my sight! [Note: The next sentence may be the beggar stating the Pharisees' argument. See verse 24]. **31)** We know that God does not listen to sinners [i.e., when they pray]; but God does listen to the person who reveres Him and does what He wants. **32)** It has never been heard of, since the world was created, that anyone has restored sight to a man born blind. **33)** Unless this man came from God, he would not be able to do anything [like this]." **34)** They replied to the beggar, "You were born entirely in sins [i.e., you have been a sinner all your life], and you are [trying] to teach us?" Then they threw him out [of the synagogue. See verse 22].

35) [When] Jesus heard that they had thrown the beggar out, He found him and asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of man?" **36)** He answered, "Who is he, sir? [Tell me], so I can believe in him." **37)** Jesus said to him, "You have seen Him and He is the One who is talking with you." **38)** And the man said, "Lord, I believe." And he knelt in front of Jesus [i.e., in reverence].

39) And Jesus said, "I came to this world to judge [it], so that people who can not see [spiritually] will [be able to] see; and those who [think they can] see [spiritually] will become blind." 40) Some Pharisees, who were with Jesus, heard [Him say] these things, and replied, "Are we blind, too?" 41) Jesus said to them, "If you were [really] blind [i.e., unable to see spiritually], you would not be guilty of sin. But since you claim, 'We can see [fine],' you remain guilty of sin."

CHAPTER TEN

1) "Truly, truly, I tell you, the person who does not enter the sheep corral through the gate, but climbs over another way [i.e., over the fence], is a thief and a robber. [Note: "Thief" suggests quiet subtlety, while "robber" suggests open aggression]. 2) But the One [i.e., Jesus is referring to Himself] who enters [it] through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep [Note: "Sheep" in this section refers to Jesus' followers]. 3) The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep respond to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out [of the corral]. 4) After he has let his own [sheep] out, he walks on ahead of them, and they follow him because they recognize his voice. 5) They will not follow a stranger, but will run from him, for they do not recognize the voice of strangers." 6) Jesus told them this parable [i.e., a brief story to illustrate his teaching] but they did not understand what it meant.

7) So, Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep [i.e., to enter the corral]. 8) All those who came before me were thieves and robbers and the sheep did not listen to them. 9) I am the gate; if anyone enters [the corral] through me, he will be saved [i.e., from condemnation], and will find pasture [i.e., will receive spiritual nurturing]. 10) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came so that people could have life to its fullest.

11) "I am the good shepherd; and a good shepherd is [willing] to die for the sheep. 12) The person who is [only] a hired hand, and not the shepherd, [and] who does not own the sheep [himself], sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away. So, the wolf attacks the flock and scatters [the sheep]. 13) [The reason] he runs away is because he is a hired hand and does not [really] care about the sheep. 14) I am the good shepherd and I know

my sheep [intimately], and they know me [that way], **15)** just like the Father knows me [intimately] and I know the Father [that way]. And I [am about to] give up my life for the sheep. **16)** I have other sheep [also] which are not [presently] in this corral; I must lead them, too. They will hear my voice and become one flock [i.e., with the others], having one shepherd. [Note: This probably refers to believing Gentiles becoming God's people, along with the Jews]. **17)** The Father loves me because I [am about to] give up my life, so that I can take it back again. **18)** No one is taking it away from me, but I am giving it up voluntarily. I have the right to give it up and I have the right to take it back again. I received the commandment to do this from my Father."

19) The Jews who heard these words became divided again [i.e., over their meaning]. **20)** Many of them said, "This man is dominated by an evil spirit; he is crazy, why listen to him?" **21)** Others said, "These are not the words of someone dominated by an evil spirit. Can an evil spirit restore sight to a blind person?"

22) During the winter, when the Festival of Dedication was being held in Jerusalem [Note: This was the Jewish festival commemorating the rededication of the Temple in 164 BC after its pagan desecration by Greeks. It is still observed today by Jews as "*Hanukkah*."], **23)** Jesus was walking in the Temple [area] in "Solomon's Portico" [Note: This was a large covered area, with rows of columns, on the outside of the Temple enclosure]. **24)** Some Jewish [authorities] gathered around Him and asked, "How long will you hold us in suspense? If you [really] are the Christ, tell us plainly." **25)** Jesus answered them, "I did tell you, but you would not believe me. The [miraculous] deeds that I am doing in my Father's name [i.e., by the Father's authority] testify about me. **26)** But you do not believe me, because you are not [part] of my sheep. **27)** My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **28)** I give them never ending life and they will never be destroyed, and no one will [be able to] steal them out of my hand. **29)** What my Father has given me [i.e., my sheep] are greater than everything [else], and no one is able to steal them from the Father's hand. **30)** I and the Father are one."

31) Then the Jews again picked up stones [intending] to stone Him. **32)** Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many good deeds [i.e., miracles], performed through the Father. Which one of them are you stoning me for?" **33)** The Jews answered Him, "We are not stoning you for a good deed, but for your abusive speech [i.e., about God], and because you are claiming to be God, even though you are

[only] a man." **34)** Jesus replied to them, "Is it not written in your law [Psa. 82:6], 'I said, you people are gods'? **35)** If God called those people, to whom His message came, "gods" (and Scripture cannot be set aside), **36)** how can you people say to Him, whom the Father set apart and sent into the world, 'You are speaking abusively [i.e., about God],' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? He is the One whom the Father set apart [i.e., for His service] and sent into the world. **37)** If I am not doing my Father's deeds [i.e., miracles], do not believe me. **38)** But if I am doing them, even though you do not believe me, believe the deeds. Then you will know and continue to know that the Father is in me, and that I am in the Father." **39)** [Then] the Jews again tried to arrest Him, but He escaped from their hands.

40) Then Jesus again went across [to the east side of] the Jordan River, to the place where John had first immersed people, and stayed there. **41)** Many people came to Him and were saying, "It is true that John did not perform any [miraculous] signs, but everything he said about this man was true." **42)** So, many people there believed in Jesus.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) Now a certain man named Lazarus, from Bethany, became sick. Bethany was the town where Mary and her sister Martha lived. [See 11:18]. **2)** This was the Mary who had poured the perfume on the Lord and wiped His feet with her hair [See Matt. 26:6-13], whose brother Lazarus was sick. **3)** So, the sisters sent [someone] to Him, saying, "Look, Lord, the person you love [i.e., your dear friend, Lazarus] is sick."

4) But when Jesus heard this, He said, "This illness will not result in [his] death, but was intended to bring honor to God, so that the Son of God would be honored by it." **5)** Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister [Mary] and [her brother] Lazarus. **6)** So, when He heard that Lazarus was sick, He stayed where He was [i.e., on the east side of the Jordan River. See 10:40] for two [more] days.

7) Then, after this, He said to His disciples, "Let us go [back] to Judea again." **8)** The disciples replied to Him, "The Jews [there] have just been trying to stone you, and you are going back again?" **9)** Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? [i.e., hours of

daylight]. If a person walks during daylight, he will not stumble because he can see [by] the sun's light. 10) But if he walks at night he [might] stumble, because there is no light [to see by]. [Note: These words have a figurative meaning as Jesus is speaking about His mission in life].

11) After saying these things He said to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him up." 12) But the disciples said to Him, "Lord, if he is [only] asleep, he will get well." 13) Now Jesus had been talking about Lazarus' death, but the disciples thought He was referring to normal sleep. 14) So, Jesus said plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15) And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there [when he died], so that [now] you will believe [i.e., when you see him miraculously raised up]. But let us go to him [now]."

16) Then Thomas, which means, "The Twin," said to his fellow disciples, "Let us go too, so we can die with Him" [i.e., by being stoned to death with Jesus. See 11:8].

17) So, when Jesus arrived, He found out that Lazarus had already been in his grave [i.e., a cave-like tomb] for four days. 18) Now Bethany was close to Jerusalem, [being] fewer than two miles away, 19) and many of Martha and Mary's Jewish friends had come to comfort them over [the loss of] their brother. 20) So, when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went [out to the edge of town. See verse 30] to meet Him, but Mary [just] sat at home [i.e., probably grief-stricken]. 21) Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if [only] you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22) And I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask Him for." 23) Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again [from the dead]." 24) Martha replied to Him, "I know that he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day [i.e., the judgment day]." 25) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; the person who believes in me will live on, even though he dies [physically]. 26) And whoever goes on living and believing in me, will never die [spiritually]. Do you believe this?" 27) Martha answered Him, "Yes, Lord, I have [already] believed that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

28) After saying this, she left and called her sister Mary and said to her privately, "The Teacher is here and is asking for you." 29) And when Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to Jesus. 30) (Now Jesus had not yet arrived in town, but was still at the place where Martha had met Him [i.e., probably on the road near the edge

of town]). 31) When Martha's Jewish friends, who had been comforting her at her house, saw Mary getting up quickly and leaving, they followed her, thinking she was going to the grave site to mourn.

32) So, when Mary arrived at where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell down at His feet and said, "Lord, if [only] you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33) When Jesus saw her and her Jewish friends, who had come with her, crying, He felt distressed in His spirit and [visibly] troubled [Note: This last word means to shake with emotion, and seems to have been caused by His deep sympathy for these grieving people], 34) and said, "Where have they laid his body?" They answered Him, "Lord, come and see." 35) Jesus shed tears. 36) [Some of] the Jewish friends then said, "Look how [much] he loved him!" [See verse 3]. 37) But others of them said, "Could not this man, who restored sight to a blind person, have kept Lazarus from dying?" 38) So, Jesus again felt distressed within Himself [as He] went to the grave site, which was a cave with a stone [slab] across its entrance. 39) Jesus said, "You people, take the stone away." [But] Martha, the dead man's sister, said to Jesus, "Lord, his body is decomposing by now, for he has been dead four days." 40) Jesus replied to her, "Did I not tell you that you would see God's glory [i.e., a miraculous resurrection. See verses 22-27] if you believed?" 41) So, they removed the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. [Note: Jesus had already prayed for and been assured of Lazarus' resurrection]. 42) I know that you always hear me, but I said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so they would believe that you sent me." 43) And after He had said this, He called out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 44) [Immediately] the man who had died came out [of the cave] with his hands and feet [still] wrapped in bandages, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to his Jewish friends, "Unwrap him and let him go."

45) When many of Mary's Jewish friends, who had come to console her, saw what Jesus had done, they believed in Him. 46) But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

47) So, the leading priests and the Pharisees assembled the Council [Note: This was the Jewish governing body called "the Sanhedrin"] and said, "What should we do, for this man is performing many [miraculous] signs? 48) If we allow him to go on [doing this], everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy our Temple.

and our nation [i.e., its people]."

49) But a certain member of the Sanhedrin, [named] Caiaphas, who was head priest that year, said to [the rest of] them, "You do not know what you are talking about. **50)** And you are not taking into consideration that it would be profitable to you for one man to die for the people, so that the entire nation would not be destroyed." **51)** Now he did not say this on his own [i.e., he was not aware of the significance of his words], but since he was head priest that year, he was prophesying [i.e., predicting] that Jesus should die for the nation. **52)** And not just [die] for the [Jewish] nation, but also that He would assemble together into one body the children of God who were scattered [throughout the world]. **53)** So, from that day onward, the Jewish authorities began plotting [how] to kill Jesus.

54) So, Jesus stopped traveling publicly among the Jews [in Judea], but left there and went to a district near the desert, to a town called Ephraim, where He remained with His disciples. [Note: Ephraim was a small town about 14 miles northeast of Jerusalem, near Samaria].

55) Now the Jewish Passover Festival was to be held soon and many people went up to Jerusalem from the countryside before the [actual] Festival in order to perform the ceremonial purification rituals. **56)** So, they began looking for Jesus and saying among themselves, as they gathered in the Temple, "What do you think? He will not attend the Festival, will he?" **57)** Now the leading priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where Jesus was, he was to report it, so they could arrest Him.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1) So, six days before the Passover Festival [began], Jesus went to Bethany, where Lazarus lived. He was the man Jesus [had] raised from the dead. **2)** There Mary and Martha prepared a meal for Jesus. Martha served it while Lazarus was among those who reclined at the table with Him. [Note: See Matt. 23:6]. **3)** Then Mary took about a pint of expensive, aromatic perfume; [it was] genuine nard [Note: This was a sweet-smelling herb] and poured [some of] it on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. The [whole] house was filled with the fragrant scent of the perfume.

4) But one of Jesus' disciples named Judas Iscariot, who later

turned Him over [i.e., to the Jewish authorities], said, 5) "Why was this perfume not sold for a large sum of money [Note: The amount here was equivalent to three hundred days of a farm laborer's pay, or over \$20,000 in 1994] and [then] the money given to poor people?" 6) Now he did not say this because he cared about poor people, but because he was in charge of the money bag, and being a thief, he used to steal from it. 7) So, Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Let her keep [the rest of] it for [use on] the day of my burial. 8) For you will always have poor people among you, but you will not always have me."

9) When a large crowd of Jews learned that Jesus was there [in Bethany], they came not only because of Him, but also to see Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead. 10) But the leading priests made plans to kill Lazarus also, 11) for because of him [i.e., his miraculous resurrection], many of the Jews rejected the priests' leadership and believed in Jesus.

12) On the next day a large crowd that had come [to Jerusalem] for the Passover Festival heard that Jesus [also] was coming to Jerusalem. 13) [So], they took branches from palm trees and went out to meet Him, shouting, "*Hosanna* [Note: See Matt. 21:9 for the meaning of this word], may He, the King of Israel, be praised, for He comes in the name [i.e., by the authority] of the Lord!" 14) Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written [Zech. 9:9], 15) "Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion [i.e., people of Jerusalem]. Look, the King is coming [to you]; He [will be] riding on a donkey's colt."

16) His disciples did not understand these things at first, but after Jesus received splendor [in heaven], then they remembered that these things had been written about Him [in Scripture] and that people had done such things to Him.

17) The crowd of people that was with Jesus [and saw Him] when He called Lazarus out of the grave and raised him from the dead, gave testimony [about all this]. 18) But the crowd that went out to meet Jesus [i.e., as He entered Jerusalem] did so because they had heard about Him performing this [miraculous] sign [i.e., of raising Lazarus]. 19) So, the Pharisees were saying among themselves, "Look, you men are getting nowhere [in this situation]. See, the [whole] world has gone after him."

20) Now there were certain Greeks among those going up to Jerusalem to worship [God] at the [Passover] Festival [Note: These people were God-fearing Gentiles like Cornelius. See Acts 10]. 21) So, these people

approached [the apostle] Philip, who was from Bethsaida, in Galilee with the request, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." 22) Philip went and told [this to] Andrew [his brother]; [then] Andrew and Philip told [it to] Jesus. 23) Then Jesus said to [all of] them, "The time has come for the Son of man to be glorified [i.e., by His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension]. 24) Truly, truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat drops into the soil and dies, it remains a single grain, but if it dies, [then] it will produce many grains. 25) The person who loves his [earthly] life will [eventually] lose it [forever], but the person who hates his life in this world will retain never ending life. 26) If any person wants to serve me, he should become my follower; and wherever I am, my servant will be there also. If any person serves me, the Father will honor him.

27) "Now my heart is distressed; and what shall I say [i.e., to God]? 'Father, bring me safely through this time.' But, this is the reason I came [to earth]; to [go through] such a time. 28) 'Father, honor your name [in all this].'"

Then a voice came out of heaven, saying, "I have honored it, and I will honor it again." 29) The crowd that was standing around heard this [i.e., the sound of the Father's voice], but said it was thunder. Others said, "An angel spoke to Him [i.e., Jesus]." 30) Jesus said to them, "This voice did not speak for my sake, but for yours. 31) Judgment is now coming to this world; the prince of this world [i.e., Satan] will now be driven out. 32) And if I am lifted up from the earth [i.e., on the cross], I will draw [i.e., attract] all people to me." 33) Now He said this to indicate the kind of death He was about to experience [i.e., of being lifted up on a cross].

34) Then the crowd replied to Him, "We have heard from [the writings of] the law of Moses that the Christ will live forever; so how can you say, 'The son of man must be lifted up [i.e., to die]?' Who is this son of man?" 35) So, Jesus said to them, "The Light will be among you for only a little while [longer]. Walk around while you [still] have the Light [with you], before darkness surrounds you. For the person who walks around in darkness does not know where he is going. 36) [So], believe in the Light [i.e., Jesus is speaking of Himself] while you [still] have the Light [with you], so that you can become enlightened people." After Jesus said these things, He left there and hid Himself from them.

37) But [even] though Jesus had performed so many

[miraculous] signs in front of the people, still they did not believe in Him. 38) This was so that these words, which Isaiah the prophet had spoken, would be fulfilled [Isa. 53:1], "Lord, who has believed our message? And who has the Lord's power been shown to?" 39) They were not able to believe because Isaiah also said [Isa. 6:10], 40) "God has blinded their eyes [of understanding] and closed their minds. If He had not done so, they would [be able to] see with their eyes and understand with their minds and turn [to God] so He could heal them [spiritually]." 41) Isaiah had said these things because he saw the [coming] glory of Jesus, and [so] was speaking about Him.

42) However, even many [Jewish] leaders believed in Him, but did not admit it, for fear of being expelled from the synagogue. 43) For they loved the honor they received from people more than the honor they [could] receive from God.

44) Then Jesus spoke out in a loud voice, "The person who believes in me, does not [only] believe in me, but [also] in Him who sent me [i.e., God]. 45) And the person who sees me, sees Him who sent me [also]. 46) I have come into the world to be a light [to it], so that whoever believes in me would not have to remain in [spiritual] darkness. 47) And if any person hears my message and does not obey it, I will not judge him [now], for I did not come into the world to judge it, but to save it. 48) The person who rejects me and does not accept my message has One who [will] judge him. The message that I have spoken will judge him in the last day [i.e., the judgment day]. 49) For I did not speak from myself [i.e., on my own authority], but the Father Himself, who sent me, has ordered me what to say and speak. 50) And I know that [obeying] His commandments [leads to] never ending life. So, the things which I say are what the Father has told me [to say]."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) Now it was before the Passover Festival [was to begin] and Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and return to the Father. Those [living] in the world, whom He had loved, and who were His own [disciples], He continued to love [dearly] to the very end [i.e., of His life on earth].

2) The devil had already filled the heart of Judas Iscariot,

Simon's son, with the desire to turn Jesus over [i.e., to the Jewish authorities]. During the [Passover] meal, 3) Jesus, who knew that the Father had given Him complete authority, [also] knew that He had come from God and was [about] to return to God. 4) So, He got up from the dinner table, laid aside His [outer] clothing and took a towel and wrapped it around Himself. 5) Then He poured water into a basin and began washing His disciples feet and drying them with the towel around His waist. 6) He came to Simon Peter, who said to Him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet, [too]?" 7) Jesus answered him, "You do not understand what I am doing, but you will later on." 8) Peter said to Him, "[No], you will never wash my feet." Jesus replied to him, "If I do not wash you, you will not be able to participate with me [i.e., as a disciple]." 9) Simon Peter [then] said to Him, "Lord, do not [just] wash my feet only, but my hands and head, too." 10) Jesus replied to him, "The person who has already had a bath is completely clean and does not need to wash anything but his feet. And you disciples are [already] clean [i.e., spiritually], but not every one of you." 11) For Jesus knew who would betray Him; that is why He said, "Not every one of you is [spiritually] clean."

12) So, after Jesus had washed His disciples' feet and put His [outer] clothing back on, He reclined again [at the dinner table] and said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? 13) You call me 'Teacher,' and 'Lord,' and you are right in doing so because that is who I am. 14) So if I, then, being your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you should wash one another's feet also. 15) For I have set an example for you, so that you should do as I have done for you. 16) Truly, truly, I tell you, a slave is not greater [in importance] than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the person who sent him. 17) If you know these things, you will be happy if you practice them.

18) "I am not talking about all of you; for I know the ones I have chosen [i.e., which of the twelve apostles would be faithful]. But let the Scripture [Psa. 41:9] be fulfilled [that says], 'The person who eats with me has [viciously] turned against me.' 19) I am telling you this now, [even] before it happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe that I am [the Messiah]. 20) Truly, truly, I tell you, the person who welcomes whoever I send welcomes me; and the one who welcomes me, welcomes God, who sent me."

21) After Jesus said this, He felt disturbed in His spirit and

declared, "Truly, truly, I tell you, one of you will turn me over [to the Jewish authorities]." 22) The disciples looked at one another, puzzled over who He was talking about. 23) One of Jesus' disciples, [the one] He loved [Note: Probably this was the apostle John] was reclining at the dinner table close to Jesus. 24) So, Simon Peter motioned [to John] and said, "Ask Jesus which one [of us] He is talking about." 25) So, John leaned over close to Jesus and asked Him, "Lord, who is it?" 26) Jesus answered, "It is the person to whom I give a piece of bread after dipping it [in the sauce bowl]." So, when He had dipped the piece of bread, He took it [out] and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27) Then after [he ate] the piece of bread, Satan entered Judas' heart. So, Jesus said to him, "Do what you are going to do, and do it quickly." 28) Now, no one at the table knew why He had said this to him. 29) For some of them thought, since Judas was in charge of the [money] bag, that Jesus was telling him, "Buy whatever we need for the [Passover] meal," or that he was [being told] to give [money] to poor people [from it]. 30) So, after eating the piece of bread, Judas went out immediately. And it was nighttime.

31) Then after Judas left, Jesus said, "Now the Son of man is [being] glorified [Note: Being "glorified" involved Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. The first step of this had now begun]. And God is [being] glorified through the Son's life. 32) And if God is [so] glorified through Him [now], God will [also] glorify the Son in Himself very soon. [Note: Possibly this was a reference to Jesus returning to the Father's presence].

33) "I will be with you, [my dear] children, for only a little while [longer]. You people will look for me, but I am now telling you what I told the Jewish authorities, 'You will not be able to go where I will be.' 34) I am giving you a new commandment: love one another. Also you should love one another in the same way that I have loved you. 35) If you love one another, then everyone will know by [observing] this that you are my disciples."

36) Simon Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "You cannot follow me where I am going now, but you will [be able to] follow later." 37) Peter [then] said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow you [there] even now? I am willing to die for you." 38) Jesus answered him, "Will you [really] die for me? Truly, truly, I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will deny [knowing] me three times."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1) [Jesus continued], "Do not allow your hearts to be upset. You should believe in God, and believe in me also. 2) There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for each one you [in them]. I would not have told you this if it were not so. 3) And if I go to prepare a place for each of you, I will return to take all you to [be with] me, so that you also will be where I am. 4) And you all know how to get where I am going." 5) Thomas said to Jesus, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how could we [possibly] know the way [to get there]?" 6) Jesus answered him, "I am the way [to God], and the truth [to believe], and the life [to live]. No one can go to the Father, except through [believing in] me. 7) If you have come to know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know Him, and have seen Him." 8) Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father and it [will] be enough for us." 9) Jesus replied to him, "Have I been with you men all this time, and [still] you do not know me, Philip? The person who has seen me, has [also] seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10) Do you not believe that I am in [fellowship with] the Father, and the Father is in [fellowship with] me? The words which I say to you do not originate with me, but it is the Father, who lives in me, who does His work [in me]. 11) You should believe me [when I say] that I am in [fellowship with] the Father, and the Father is in [fellowship with] me. Or else believe me for the sake of the deeds themselves that I perform. 12) Truly, truly, I tell you, the person who believes in me will perform the deeds that I do also; and he will perform even greater deeds than these, because I am going to the Father. [Note: The "greater deeds" are probably evangelizing the world]. 13) And I will do [for you] whatever you ask in my name [i.e., by my authority], so that the Father may be honored through the Son. 14) I will do anything [for you], if you ask [for it] in my name. 15) If you love me, you will obey my commandments.

16) "And I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper [i.e., besides me], who will be with you forever. 17) He is the Holy Spirit of truth [i.e., who reveals truth], whom the world cannot receive, for it does not see Him or know Him. [But] you know Him, for He lives with you, and will be within you. 18) I will not abandon

YOU [Note: The Greek says, "leave you orphans"]; I will come [back] to you. **19)** After a little while [longer] the world will not see me anymore, but you men will see me. Because I [will continue to] live, you will live also. **20)** When that day comes [i.e., after His ascension?], you will know that I am in [fellowship with] the Father, and that you are in [fellowship with] me, and that I am in you [i.e., through the Holy Spirit]. **21)** The person who knows [what] my commandments [are] and obeys them is the one who [truly] loves me. And the person who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.

22) [Then] Judas (not the betrayer) [Note: This was the son of James, See Luke 6:16. He is also called Thaddaeus, See Matt. 10:3], said to Jesus, "Lord, what has happened [i.e., to your original plans to be seen by everyone when you came. See Luke 21:27], that you will reveal yourself to us apostles [only] and not to the [whole] world?" **23)** Jesus answered him, "If a person loves me, he will obey my teaching, and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him [i.e., in the person of the indwelling Holy Spirit]. **24)** The person who does not love me will not obey my teaching. And the message you are hearing is not mine, but belongs to the Father, who sent me."

25) "I have told you these things while I am still with you. **26)** But the Helper, that is, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name [i.e., by my authority] will teach you everything. And He will remind you of everything that I [have] said to you. **27)** I leave you with peace; I give you my peace. I am not giving you peace like the world gives. Do not allow your hearts to be upset or afraid. **28)** You heard me say to you, 'I am going away and I am returning to you.' If you [really] loved me, you would have been happy that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I am. **29)** Now I have told you this, even before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe [in me]. **30)** I will not speak with you very much anymore because the ruler of the world [i.e., Satan] is coming, and he has no control over me. **31)** But, in order for the world to know that I love the Father, I am [always] doing what the Father commands me to. Let us get up, and leave here." [i.e., leave the room where they had eaten the Passover meal. See 13:1 with 18:1].

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1) [Jesus continued], "I am the real vine, and my Father is the owner of the vineyard. 2) He will cut off [See verse 6] every branch [i.e., follower of Christ] who is in [fellowship with] me that does not bear fruit. And He will prune every branch that does bear fruit, so it will bear more fruit. 3) You people are already 'clean' [i.e., have been pruned of undesirable traits] because of [obedience to] the teaching I have given you. 4) Remain united to me, and I will remain united to you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it remains united to the vine, so neither can you people [bear fruit] unless you remain united to me.

5) "I am the vine; you people are the branches. The person who remains united to me, and I to him, will bear much fruit. For you cannot do anything if [you are] separated from me. 6) If a person does not remain united to me, he will be thrown out as a [fruitless] branch and dried up. People gather up such branches and throw them into the fire to be burned [as fuel?]. 7) If you remain in [fellowship with] me and my teaching remains in your hearts, [you can] ask for whatever you want, and it will be done for you. 8) My Father is honored by your bearing much fruit and [thus] showing that you are my disciples.

9) "Just as the Father has loved me, [so] I have also loved you. You should continue to receive [or, respond to] my love. [Note: The next verse tells how this can be done]. 10) If you obey my commandments, [then] you will continue receiving my love; just as I have obeyed my Father's commandments and [so] continue receiving His love. 11) I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in your hearts, and that your joy may be complete. 12) My commandment [to you] is this: You should love one another just as I have loved you. 13) No one has [any] greater love than to give up his life for his friends. 14) You people are my friends if you do what I command you to. 15) I do not call you slaves anymore, for a slave does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, because I have told you everything that I heard from my Father. 16) You [apostles] did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you to go and bear much fruit [i.e., through their evangelizing], and that your fruit should last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask Him for in my name [i.e. by my authority]. 17) I command you to do these things so

that you will [demonstrate your] love for one another. [Note: Or this may mean that His command was to love one another, as in verse 12].

18) "If the world hates you, then know that it has [already] hated me, [even] before it hated you. **19)** If you belonged to the world, the world would love [you as] its own people. But since you do not belong to the world, for I chose you out of it, that is why the world hates you. **20)** Remember what I said to you, 'A slave is not greater [in importance] than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will [also] persecute you, too; if they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. **21)** But they [i.e., the world] will do all these things to you for my name's sake [i.e., because you are my disciples], for they do not know Him [i.e., God], who sent me. **22)** They would not be guilty of sinning if I had not come and spoken to them. But now [that I have], they have no excuse for their sin. **23)** The person who hates me, hates my Father also. **24)** If I had not performed the [miraculous] deeds among them which no one else had done, they would not be guilty of sinning. But now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father. **25)** This all happened so the Scripture, written in their law [Psa. 35:19], would be fulfilled, 'They hated me for no reason.'

26) "But the Helper will come, that is, the Holy Spirit of truth [i.e., who reveals truth]. He comes from the Father and I will send Him to you from the Father. [When He comes] He will give testimony about me. **27)** And you will give testimony about me [also], because you men have been with me from the beginning [of my ministry]."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1) [Jesus continued], "I have told you these things so that you men would not fall away [i.e., from the faith]. **2)** The Jewish authorities will expel you from their synagogues. In fact, the time will come when whoever kills you will think he is doing a service to God. **3)** And they will do these things because they have not known [either] the Father or me. **4)** But I have told you these things so that, when the time comes [for people to do such things], you will remember that I had warned you. I did not tell you them at the beginning [of my ministry] because I was with you [i.e., to protect you from

persecution].

5) "But now I am going to Him who sent me; yet none of you is asking me, 'Where are you going?' 6) And now that I have told you these things, your hearts are full of grief. 7) Yet I am telling you the truth: It will be helpful to you for me to go away. For unless I go, the Helper [i.e., the Holy Spirit] will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. 8) And when He does come, He will bring conviction to the world regarding sin [i.e., exposing it and producing guilt], regarding what is right [i.e., upholding godly standards], and regarding judgment [i.e., showing that sin condemns]. 9) [The world will be proven guilty] of sin for not believing in me. 10) [It will be shown] what is right because I am going [back] to the Father and you will not see me anymore. 11) [And it will be shown] judgment, because the ruler of this world [i.e., Satan. See 12:31] has been condemned [i.e., by Jesus' death and resurrection].

12) "I still have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear [to hear] them at present. 13) However, when the Holy Spirit of truth comes, He will lead you [apostles] into all the truth. For He will not speak on His own authority, but will speak [only] what He hears [from the Father]. And He will tell you about the things that are to come. 14) He will honor me, for He will receive what belongs to me and will declare it to you. 15) Everything the Father has belongs to me. Therefore, I said that the Holy Spirit will receive what belongs to me and will declare it to you.

16) "After a little while [longer] you will not see me anymore. Then a little while [later] you will see me again."

17) Then some of Jesus' disciples said to one another, "What is this He is telling us: 'After a little while [longer] you will not see me. Then, a little while [later] you will see me again,' and 'Because I am going [back] to the Father?'" [See verse 10]. 18) So, they [again] said, "What does He mean by saying, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is talking about."

19) Jesus sensed that the disciples wanted to ask Him a question, so He said to them, "Are you discussing among yourselves my saying 'After a little while [longer] you will not see me. Then, a little while [later] you will see me again'? 20) Truly, truly, I tell you, you will cry and mourn [i.e., over my suffering and death], but the world will be glad [about it]. You will be sad, but your sadness will turn to joy [i.e., when learning of my resurrection]. 21) A woman has

pain when giving birth because her time has come. But when the child is born, she does not remember the intense suffering because she is so happy over the child being born into the world. 22) So, you men also will experience grief [i.e., over my suffering and death], but I will see you again and your hearts will be glad. And no one will take away your joy. 23) At that time [i.e., after my resurrection], you will not be asking me [for] anything. Truly, truly, I tell you, if you will ask the Father for anything [then], in my name [i.e., by my authority], He will give it to you. 24) Up until now you have not asked for anything in my name. [So now] ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be complete."

25) "I have spoken these things to you in figurative language. [However], the time will come when I will not speak to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly about the Father. 26) At that time you will ask Him [i.e., for things in prayer], in my name; I do not say that I will ask the Father for you, 27) for the Father Himself loves you [i.e., and will grant your requests without my persuasion], because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. 28) I came from the Father into this world and now I am leaving the world and returning to the Father."

29) [Then] Jesus' disciples said [to Him], "Look, you are speaking plainly now, and not in figurative language. 30) Now we realize that you know everything and do not need anyone to ask you [questions]. This makes us believe that you came from God." 31) Jesus replied to them, "Do you believe [in me] now? 32) Look, the time is coming --- yes, it is already here --- when each of you will be scattered to his own home, and will leave me [all] alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. 33) I have said these things to you so that you can have peace in [fellowship with] me. You will have trouble in the world, but cheer up, for I have conquered the world."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1) After saying these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the time has come; honor your Son so that your Son may honor you. 2) Just as you gave Him authority over all mankind, He will give never ending life to all those people [Note: The Greek word here

is neuter gender, "all those things"] you have given Him. 3) And this is never ending life; that people may know you [as] the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the One whom you have sent. 4) I am honoring you [while] on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. 5) And now, Father, honor me in your presence with the honor I had with you before the world was [created]. 6) I have revealed your name [i.e., your power and character] to the men you gave me out of the world [i.e., the apostles]. They belonged to you, but you gave them to me, and they have obeyed your word. 7) Now they know that everything you gave me came from you, 8) because I have given them the message you gave me, and they accepted it. They [also] knew for certain that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9) I am praying for them [i.e., the apostles]; I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you gave me, who belong to you. 10) And everything I have belongs to you, and what you have belongs to me; and I am honored through these men. 11) And [now] I am coming to you, for I will not be in the world any longer, yet these men are [still] in the world. Holy Father, protect them by [the power of] your name which you have given me. May these men be one, as we are. 12) I protected them while I was with them by [the power of] your name which you gave me. [See verse 11]. I guarded them so that not one of them was lost except the "son of destruction" [i.e., Judas]. [This was] so that the Scripture would be fulfilled [Psa. 41:9?]. 13) "But now I am coming to you, and I am speaking these things [while still] in the world, so that they [i.e., the apostles] may have my joy within them in all its fullness. 14) I have given them your word, and the world hated them because they do not belong to the world just as I do not belong to the world. 15) I am not praying that you should take them out of the world, but that you should protect them from the evil one [i.e., the devil]. 16) They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 17) Set them apart [i.e., for your service] through the truth; your word is truth. 18) Just as you have sent me into the world, so I have sent [i.e., will send] them into the world. 19) And for their sakes I dedicate myself [to you] so that they themselves also may be truly dedicated [to you].

20) "I am not praying for these [apostles] only, but also for [all of] those who believe in me through their message. 21) [I pray] that all of them may be one, just as you, Father, are [one] in [fellowship with] me, and I [am one] in [fellowship with] you, so that

they also may be [one] in [fellowship with] us in order that the world may [see it and] believe that you sent me. 22) And I have given them [i.e., all believers] the honor which you gave me, so that they may be one, just as we are one: 23) I in them, and you in me, so that they may be completely one. [This is] so the world will know that you sent me and that you love them just as you love me.

24) "Father, I want those you gave me [i.e., the apostles, see verse 6] to be with me where I am [going], so they will see my splendor [i.e., in heaven], which you have given me, for you loved me before the creation of the world. 25) Righteous Father, the world does not know you but I know you, and these men know that you sent me. 26) And I declared your name to them and I will continue to declare it, so that the love you have for me will be in them [also], and that I [will be] in them."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1) After Jesus had said these things He went out with His disciples across the Kidron valley. [Note: This was a "wadi," or dry creek bed which carried a torrent of water during the rainy season. It ran parallel with the east wall of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives]. There was an [olive] orchard there and Jesus and His disciples went into it.

2) Now Judas, who [was soon to] turn Jesus over [to the Jewish authorities] also knew where this place was, for Jesus had frequently met there with His disciples. 3) So, Judas took a detachment of [Roman] soldiers and some [Temple] guards sent from the leading priests and Pharisees, and carrying lanterns, torches and weapons, they went to the orchard.

4) Since Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to Him, He went out and said to them, "Who are you men looking for?" 5) They answered Him, "Jesus, from Nazareth." Jesus replied to them, "I am [He]." Judas, who was turning Him over [to the Jewish authorities] was standing there with them also. 6) Now when Jesus had said to them, "I am [He]," they [all] moved backward and fell to the ground. [Note: This appears to have been done by some miraculous power]. 7) So, He asked them again, "Who are you looking for?" And they answered, "Jesus, from Nazareth." 8) Jesus said to them, "I [already] told you that I am [He]; so if you are looking for me, let these men [i.e., the apostles] go." 9) [He said this] so the words He had spoken

[previously] would be fulfilled, [See 17:12], "I did not lose any of those men you [i.e., God] gave me."

10) So, Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it out and struck the head priest's slave, cutting off his right ear. Now the slave's name was Malchus. 11) Then Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back in its sheath. Should I not drink the cup [i.e., of suffering] the Father has given me?"

12) So, the detachment of [Roman] soldiers, their commanding officer and the Jewish [Temple] guards arrested Jesus and tied Him up. 13) They led Him to Annas first, [Note: This man was a former head priest. See Luke 3:2], for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was head priest that year. 14) Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was profitable for one man to die for the people. [See 11:50].

15) Simon Peter followed along with another disciple. [Note: Some think this refers to the apostle John himself, but there is no strong evidence in favor of that conclusion]. Now that disciple was [well-] known to the head priest, so was able to enter his courtyard with Jesus 16) while Peter stood outside at the gate. So, the other disciple, who was [well-] known to the head priest, went outside and spoke to the girl gatekeeper, [who] then brought Peter inside [too]. 17) So, the slave-girl gatekeeper asked Peter, "Are you not one of this man's disciples, too?" "[No], I am not," Peter replied. 18) Now the [head priest's] slaves and the [Temple] guards were standing around a charcoal fire they had made to warm themselves by, because it was cold. And Peter was also warming himself with them.

19) Meanwhile, the head priest asked Jesus about His disciples and His teaching. [Note: This was probably Annas, the former "head priest" who later sent Jesus to the current head priest, Caiaphas. See verse 24]. 20) Jesus answered him, "I have spoken publicly to the world; I always taught in the synagogues and in the Temple, where all the Jews assemble. I have never said anything in secret. 21) Why are you asking me? Ask the people who have heard me about what I said to them. Look, these people know what I said."

22) When Jesus said this, one of the guards standing there struck Him [in the face], saying, "Is that any way to talk to the head priest?" 23) Jesus answered him, "If I have said anything wrong, tell me what it was. But if [I spoke] properly, why did you hit me?" 24) So, Annas had Him tied up and sent Him [on] to Caiaphas, the head

priest.

25) Now Simon Peter had been standing and warming himself [by the outdoor charcoal fire]. So, someone asked him, "Are you not one of His disciples, too?" Peter denied it, saying, "[No], I am not." **26)** One of the head priest's slaves, who was a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the orchard with him?" **27)** So, Peter denied it again, and immediately the rooster crowed.

28) Then, early in the morning they led Jesus from Caiaphas to [governor Pilate's] headquarters. But the Jewish authorities would not enter it, because [if they had] they would have become ceremonially unclean, and could not eat the Passover meal. [Note: This was because they regarded a Gentile house as defiling]. **29)** So, Pilate went outside to them and asked, "What charge do you bring against this man?" **30)** The Jewish authorities answered Pilate, "If this man were not guilty of wrongdoing, we would not have turned him over to you." **31)** So, Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your [own] law." [But] the Jews replied to him, "It is not permissible for us to put anyone to death." **32)** [They said this] so that the words Jesus had spoken would be fulfilled, regarding the kind of death He would die. [Note: Jesus had predicted he would be "lifted up," indicating a Roman crucifixion. See 12:32-33].

33) So, Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus. He said to Him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" **34)** Jesus answered, "Are you saying this of your own accord, or did other people tell you about me?" **35)** Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own people and the leading priests turned you over to me. What have you done?" **36)** Jesus answered him, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If it did, then my servants [i.e., disciples] would fight to keep me from being turned over to the Jews. But now my kingdom does not belong here." [i.e., Jesus' kingdom was not based on physical, but spiritual principles]. **37)** So, Pilate said to Him, "Are you a king, then?" Jesus answered, "You are [accurate in] calling me a 'king.' This was the [very] purpose for which I was born and came into the world, that I should testify about the truth. Every person who wants [to know and obey] the truth listens to me." **38)** Pilate replied to Him, "What is truth?"

After saying this, Pilate again went outside to the Jews and said to them, "I do not find him guilty of any crime. **39)** But since you

[Jews] have a custom that I should release to you one [prisoner] during the Passover Festival, do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" 40) They shouted out again, "[No], not this man. [We want] Barabbas!" [Note: Ironically, Barabbas' name means "son of the father"]. Now Barabbas was a robber.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

1) So, Pilate then took Jesus and had Him flogged. 2) The soldiers wove thorny twigs into a crown and placed it on His head and dressed Him in a purple robe. 3) Then they went [up] to Him and said, "Hey! King of the Jews!" and struck Him [in the face with their hands]. 4) Now Pilate went outside again and said to the Jewish authorities, "Look, I am bringing him out here to you, so you can know that I do not find him guilty of any crime." 5) So, Jesus came outside wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Then Pilate said to the [assembled] Jewish authorities, "Look, [here is] the man!"

6) Then, when the leading priests and the [Temple] guards saw Him, they shouted out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate responded by saying, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, because I do not find him guilty of any crime." 7) The Jews replied, "We have a law which requires that he ought to die because he claimed to be the Son of God." 8) So, when Pilate heard this statement, he was [even] more afraid 9) and went back into the headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where did you come from?" But Jesus did not answer him. 10) Then Pilate said to Him, "Are you not going to speak to me? Do you not know that I have the authority to release you or to crucify you?" 11) Jesus answered him, "You would not have any authority over me unless it were given to you from above [i.e., from God]. So, the person who turned me over to you is guilty of a worse sin."

12) After [hearing] this, Pilate tried to release Jesus, but the Jews shouted out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar's. Everyone who claims to be a king [i.e., as they had accused Jesus of doing. See 18:37] is in opposition to Caesar." 13) Then when Pilate heard [them say] this, he brought Jesus outside [again] and sat down on the judge's bench at a place called 'The Stone Pavement,' but in the Hebrew language is called '*Gabbatha*.' 14) Now it was about six o'clock in the morning [Note: This was according to Roman time, but if Jewish

time were meant, it would have been 12 noon] on the Day of Preparation for the Passover Festival. [Note: This would be the day before the Passover Festival]. And Pilate said to the Jews, "Look, [here is] your king!" 15) Then they shouted out, "Take him away; take him away and crucify him!" Pilate replied to them, "Do you want me to crucify your king?" The leading priests answered, "We do not have any [other] king, except Caesar." 16) Finally, Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

17) So, they took Jesus [away] and He went out [of the city] carrying the cross by Himself to a place called "The Place of the Skull," [also] called "*Golgotha*" in the Hebrew language [and "*Calvary*" in Latin]. 18) There they crucified Him, along with two other men, one on each side with Jesus in the middle.

19) Then Pilate had an inscription written and placed on the cross [i.e., on the upright portion, above His head]. It read, "Jesus from Nazareth, the King of the Jews." 20) Many of the Jews read this notice, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city [of Jerusalem]. It was written in the Hebrew, Latin and Greek languages. 21) But the Jewish leading priests said to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but 'He said, I am the King of the Jews.'" 22) Pilate replied, "What I have written I have written" [i.e., "I am not going to change it."]

23) So, when the [Roman] soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took His clothing and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took His seamless coat [i.e., which was left over], woven from top [to bottom] in one piece, 24) and said to one another, "Let us not tear it [i.e., because of its great value], but gamble to see who gets it." [This was] so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, which said [Psa. 22:18], "They divided my clothing between themselves, and they gambled for my clothing." So, this is what the soldiers did.

25) Now standing near Jesus' cross were His mother; His mother's sister [i.e., Salome, the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee. See Matt. 27:55; Mark 15:40]; Mary the wife of Clopas [i.e., the mother of James and Joseph. See Matt. 27:55]; and Mary, from Magdala. 26) So, when Jesus saw His mother standing beside the disciple He loved [i.e., probably the apostle John], He said to her, "[My dear] woman, look, [here is] your son!" 27) Then He said to the disciple, "Look, [here is] your mother!" And from that time onward, this disciple took Jesus' mother to [live in] his own home.

28) Now Jesus knew that everything had been completed [i.e., relating to His crucifixion], so then He said, in order to fulfill Scripture [Psa. 69:21], "I am thirsty." **29)** A bottle full of sour wine was sitting nearby so someone put a sponge full of the wine on a hyssop plant stalk and lifted it up to Jesus' mouth. **30)** After drinking some of the sour wine, Jesus said, "It is completed," [i.e., His work of dying for the sins of mankind] and gave up His spirit [i.e., to God. See Luke 23:46].

31) Now it was the Day of Preparation [Note: This was the day before the Passover Festival began, and fell on a Friday that year], and the Jews did not permit bodies to remain on a cross over the Sabbath day. (Besides, that Sabbath day was a special day [i.e., since it was both the Passover and the regular weekly Sabbath, as well]). So, they asked Pilate to have Jesus' and the criminals' legs broken [i.e., to speed up their deaths] and then have their bodies taken away. **32)** So, the soldiers went and broke the legs of the first [criminal] and then of the other man crucified with Jesus. **33)** But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. **34)** However, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. **35)** And the person who saw this happen is giving a true testimony about it. He knows it is true [and is giving it] so that you will believe [it, also]. **36)** For these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled [Ex. 12:46], "Not a [single] bone of his will be broken." **37)** And another Scripture says [Zech. 12:10], "People will look at him whom they [had] pierced."

38) After this happened, one of Jesus' disciples (but secretly, for fear of the Jews), named Joseph from Arimathaea, asked Pilate if he could remove Jesus' body [from the cross]. Pilate granted him permission, so he went and removed the body from the cross. **39)** Nicodemus, the man who first came to Jesus one night, also went with him [i.e., to claim Jesus' body]. He brought about a seventy five pound mixture of myrrh and aloes [i.e., aromatic spices used for embalming]. **40)** So, they took Jesus' body and wrapped it in linen cloths, with spices, according to customary Jewish burial practices. **41)** Now there was an [olive] orchard at the place where Jesus was crucified. And in the orchard there was a new grave site [i.e., a cave-like tomb] where no one had ever been buried. **42)** So, they placed Jesus' body there, for it was the Day of Preparation and that was the

closest grave site. [Note: Since this was the day before the Passover Festival, and the next day was also the regular weekly Sabbath, they had to bury the body before sundown to comply with Jewish restrictions against working on a Sabbath day].

CHAPTER TWENTY

1) Now early [in the morning], while it was still dark on the first day of the week [i.e., Sunday], Mary from Magdala went to the [cave-like] tomb and saw the stone [had been] removed from [the entrance of] the tomb. 2) So, she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved [i.e., probably the apostle John], and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have put Him."

3) So, Peter and the other disciple left [hurriedly] and went to the grave site. 4) The two of them ran together, but the other disciple outran Peter and arrived at the grave site first. 5) He stooped down and looked inside [the cave-like tomb] and saw the linen cloths lying there [i.e., these were wrappings used to hold embalming spices against the body], but he did not go in. 6) Then Simon Peter, who had been following him, also arrived and went [straight] into the cave-like tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there. 7) Now the cloth that had been around Jesus' head was not lying with the [other] linen cloths, but was rolled up by itself. 8) Finally, the other disciple, who had arrived at the cave-like tomb first, went on into it. And [when] he saw [the grave clothes, but no body] he believed [in Jesus' resurrection]. 9) But these disciples still did not understand the Scripture that [predicted] Jesus must rise again from the dead.

10) So, the disciples went back home again, 11) but Mary [from Magdala] was standing outside of the cave-like tomb crying. While she was [still] crying she stooped down to look in the tomb, 12) and there she saw two angels [dressed] in white [clothing] sitting where Jesus' body had lain, one at His head and one at His feet. 13) They said to Mary, "[My dear] woman, why are you crying?" She answered, "They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put Him." 14) After she said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but did not know it was Him. 15) [Then] Jesus said to her, "[My dear] woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?" Assuming He was the groundskeeper, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away from here, tell me where

you laid Him, and I will go and get Him." 16) [Then] Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned toward Him and replied in the Hebrew language, "*Rabboni*," which means "Teacher." 17) Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not ascended to the Father yet [Note: Apparently Jesus was discouraging Mary from embracing Him in worship as was done in Matt. 28:9, and thereby causing a delay of when the rest of the disciples would learn of His resurrection], but go to my brothers and tell them [I said] 'I am [about] to ascend to my Father and to your Father, and to my God and your God.'" 18) So, Mary from Magdala went and told the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her. [See Matt. 28:7-10].

19) So, when it was evening on that day, [which was] the first day of the week [i.e., Sunday] and the doors [of someone's house], where the disciples were gathered, were closed [i.e., probably locked] for fear of the Jewish authorities, Jesus came and stood among them. [Note: Probably Jesus passed through the closed door miraculously]. He said to them, "May there be peace in your hearts." 20) After saying this, Jesus showed them His hands and His side, so they rejoiced when they saw the Lord [i.e., now convinced that He had indeed risen from the dead]. 21) Jesus said to them again, "May there be peace in your hearts. Just as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." 22) Upon saying this, Jesus breathed on the disciples and said to them, "[Be willing to] receive the Holy Spirit." [Note: This "breathing" served as a pledge of the Holy Spirit which actually came on these apostles a few weeks later. See Acts 1:5-8; 2:4]. 23) Whosoever sins you forgive, they will be forgiven [by God]. And whosoever sins you do not forgive, they will not be forgiven [by God]." [Note: Actual forgiveness would result only when people responded, by faith, to the Gospel message. See Acts 2:37-38].

24) But one of the twelve apostles, named Thomas, [and also] called "The Twin," was not with them when Jesus came. 25) So, the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he replied to them, "I will not believe [it] unless I see the scars of the nails in His hands, and put my finger on the nail scars, and put my hand in His side."

26) Eight days later [i.e., the following Sunday], Jesus' disciples were inside [the house] again, [but this time] Thomas was with them. The doors were [still] closed when Jesus [suddenly] stood among them [See note on verse 19] and said, "May there be peace in your hearts." 27) Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here [i.e., to touch the nail scars] and look at my hands. Reach out your hand

and put it into my side [i.e., where the spear had pierced Him]. Stop doubting and believe [that it is really me]." 28) Thomas replied to Him, "My Lord and my God." 29) Jesus said to him, "Have you believed [that I am alive] because you have seen me? Those who have not seen me and yet believe are [even more] blessed."

30) Jesus performed many other [miraculous] signs in front of His disciples which are not recorded in this book [i.e., in the Gospel of John]. 31) But these [signs] are written down so that you will believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that when you believe [this], you will have [never ending] life in His name [i.e., through His person and work].

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1) After these things happened Jesus showed Himself to His disciples again at Lake Tiberias. [Note: This was another name for Lake Galilee]. Here is the way He did it. 2) Simon Peter; Thomas, called "The Twin;" Nathaniel from Cana in Galilee; the sons of Zebedee [i.e., James and John] and two other disciples of Jesus were [all] together [at the lake]. 3) Simon Peter said to [the rest of] them, "I am going fishing." The others replied to him, "We will go with you, too." [So], they went out and got into their boat but did not catch anything that night.

4) Now as the day was dawning Jesus was [seen] standing on the shore, but the disciples did not know it was Jesus. [Note: Probably because it was not light enough yet]. 5) So, Jesus said to them, "Young fellows, you have not [caught] any fish yet, have you?" They answered Him, "No, [we have not]." 6) Then He said to them, "Throw your net over the right side of the boat and you will catch some [fish]. So, they threw [the net out] but they were not able to pull it in because of so many fish. 7) So, that disciple whom Jesus loved [i.e., probably the apostle John] said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard it was the Lord, he wrapped his outer robe around him, (for he [had taken it off and] was wearing only his underclothing) and jumped into the lake. 8) But the other disciples came [to shore] in their little boat, dragging their net full of fish (for they were only about a hundred yards from land). 9) So, when they got to shore, they saw a charcoal fire burning there with fish [cooking] on it and [some] bread. 10)

Jesus said to them, "Bring [me] some of the fish you just caught." 11) Then Simon Peter boarded [the boat] and dragged the net full of large fish to shore. And even though there were one hundred fifty-three [fish], the net did not tear from such a large number. 12) Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." [But] none of the disciples dared to ask Him, "Who are you?" because they [already] knew it was the Lord. 13) [So], Jesus went [over to them] and took the bread and fish and gave it to them. 14) This was then the third time that Jesus was made known to His disciples after He arose from the dead.

15) So, after they had eaten, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you really love me more than these [other disciples do]?" Peter answered Him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." [Note: Since two different Greek words for "love" are used in this conversation, some scholars see a distinction in their meaning. See Butler, Vol. II, pp. 453-457 for a discussion of these views]. Jesus replied to him, "[Then] feed my lambs." 16) Jesus asked him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you [really] love me?" Peter answered Him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus replied to him, "[Then] take care of my sheep." 17) Then Jesus asked him a third time, "Simon, son of John, do you [truly] love me?" Peter was sad because Jesus had asked him a third time, "Do you [even] love me?" So, he said to Jesus, "Lord, you know all things. You [surely] know that I love you." Jesus replied to him, "[Then] feed my sheep. 18) Truly, truly, I tell you [Peter], when you were young you used to fasten your belt around you [i.e., to get ready] and travel wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you up and take you [away] to where you do not want to go." 19) Now Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death Peter would experience in honoring God. [Note: Some see the "stretching out your hands", verse 18, as a reference to crucifixion]. And after saying this, Jesus said to him, "Be my follower."

20) Peter turned around and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved [i.e., probably the apostle John] following [along behind him]. This was the same disciple who had leaned over close to Jesus at the [Passover] meal and asked Him, "Lord, who is it that will turn you over [to the Jewish authorities]?" 21) [When] Peter saw this disciple, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what will happen to this man?" 22) Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain [alive] until I return, what [business] is that of yours? You be my follower." 23) So, a rumor began circulating among the brothers that this disciple would not die. Yet

Jesus did not tell him he would not die, but [He said], "If I want him to remain [alive] until I return, what [business] is that of yours?"

24) This is the disciple who is giving testimony about these things and has written them down, and we know his testimony is true.

25) And Jesus did many other things; if every one of them were written down, I do not think the world would hold [all] the books that would be written.

ACTS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [Dear] Theophilus, in my former letter [i.e., the Gospel of Luke] I wrote to you concerning what all Jesus did and taught since the beginning [of His ministry], 2) up until the day He returned to heaven. [Just before that time] He had given [certain] instructions to His [specially] selected apostles through [the direction of] the Holy Spirit. 3) Now, between His death on the cross and His resurrection, Jesus appeared alive [to His apostles] for forty days, and demonstrated by many convincing proofs [that He had been raised bodily from the dead]. [During that time] He also spoke to them about the [coming] kingdom of God. 4) [One day, as He was] gathered with these apostles, He urged them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there until they received what the Father had promised them. (Jesus had previously discussed this with them). [See Luke 24:49]. 5) For [Jesus had said, Matt. 3:11], "John immersed you [men] in water but [this time] you will be immersed in the Holy Spirit, and [it will happen] in just a few more days."

6) When the apostles had come together, they asked [Jesus], "Lord, are you ready to restore the kingdom [of God] to [the nation of] Israel [at this time]?" 7) Jesus replied, "You are not permitted to know the [specific] time or date [when this will happen]. For the Father has appointed it [to happen] when He determines [the right time]. 8) But, you apostles will receive power when the Holy Spirit descends on you and [then] you will become My witnesses [i.e., to tell what you know] in Jerusalem, in [the countries of] Judea and Samaria, and [even] to the distant regions of the earth."

9) And when Jesus had said these things, just as the apostles were watching [Him], He was taken up by a cloud [and disappeared] out of their sight. 10) And while they gazed up into the sky as He ascended, suddenly two men wearing white clothing appeared beside them 11) and said, "You men from Galilee, why are you standing there looking up at the sky? This Jesus who was received up from your presence into the sky will return in the same way you saw Him go there."

12) Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the place called "Mount of Olives," which was about three-fourths of a mile from Jerusalem. 13) Upon arriving at the house where they were staying, they went upstairs. [Those present were]: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James, the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealous [one] and Judas, the son of James. [Note: Judas Iscariot, the twelfth apostle, had already committed suicide]. 14) These men continued in united prayer [for the kingdom to come? See 1:6; Matt. 6:10] along with [certain] women, Mary the mother of Jesus and His [half-] brothers.

15) And during this time Peter stood up to speak to a gathering of about one hundred twenty persons. 16) [He said], "Brothers, it was necessary that the Scriptures be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke through King David about Judas, who guided the soldiers who came to arrest Jesus. 17) For he was one of our number and shared with us [in the responsibility of] this ministry. 18) (Now this man [Judas] paid for [in a sense] a [burial] field with the reward money he had received for his sinful act [of betraying Jesus, See Matt. 27:3-10]. [Then, some time after Judas hanged himself, See Matt. 27:5] he fell down headlong, [his swollen body] bursting so that his intestines gushed out. 19) This incident became known to everyone who lived in Jerusalem so that the [burial] field purchased with the reward money became known as "*Akeldama*" [an Aramaic word] which means "Field of Blood." 20) For it was written [about Judas] in the book of Psalms [69:25]: "Let the place where he lives become deserted, with no one living there" and [Psa. 109:8] "Let someone else fill his ministry." 21) The person [to replace Judas] would have to be one of those who accompanied us [disciples] during the time the Lord traveled around with us, 22) from His immersion by John [the Immerser] until He was received up from us [in a cloud]. Of these people [we must choose] someone to become a witness with us [i.e., to tell people] of Jesus' resurrection [from the dead].

23) And so they presented two men [for consideration]: Joseph, called Barsabbas (and also called Justus) and Matthias. 24) Then they prayed, "Lord, you know the inner thoughts of all men, so show us which one of these two men should be selected 25) to replace Judas in this ministry and this group of apostles, from which he fell away to go to where he belonged." [i.e., to the place of punishment for unrepentant sinners]. 26) So, they drew lots [i.e., devices used for

making random choices] and the lot [i.e., the choice] favored Matthias, so he was added to the other eleven apostles.

CHAPTER TWO

1) And when the day of Pentecost came [Note: This was a Jewish festival held fifty days following the Passover Festival. Lev. 23:15-21], they [i.e., the twelve apostles] were all gathered together in one place [i.e., their second story living quarters, 1:13]. 2) Suddenly a rushing sound, like a fierce wind blowing, came from the sky above them, and [its noise] filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3) Then they saw what appeared to be flames of fire shooting down and landing on each one of them. 4) And they [i.e., the apostles] were all filled with [the power of] the Holy Spirit and began to speak ["the mighty accomplishments of God", See verse 11] in different languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them the ability.

5) Now some devoted Jews from every nation of the world were visiting Jerusalem [for the Pentecost festival]. 6) And when they heard the noise [of the blowing wind] a large number of them assembled [around the apostles] and were puzzled over how they could hear them speaking in their native languages. 7) Being so amazed and astounded [at something so unusual happening], they exclaimed, "Look! are not all these men who are speaking from [the country of] Galilee? 8) How is it then, that we are hearing them speak in our own native languages: 9) Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappodocia, Pontus, Asia, 10) Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt and areas of Libya around Cyrene, Jewish and proselyte travelers from Rome, 11) Cretans and Arabians. How can it be that we hear [these apostles] speaking about the mighty accomplishments of God in the language of our national origin? 12) And they were amazed and perplexed [over this] and began saying to one another, "What does all this mean?" 13) But others made fun of them, saying, "Oh, they are just drunk [i.e., full of new wine]."

14) But Peter [responded by] standing up with the eleven [other] apostles and, lifting up his voice, began to speak. He said, "People of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, listen to what I am saying so you will understand this situation. 15) For these men [i.e., the twelve apostles] are not drunk as you suppose, since it is only

nine o'clock in the morning. [Note: The use of Jewish time calculations are employed in this verse]. **16)** But what you see happening is simply [the fulfillment of] what was predicted by the prophet Joel [2:28ff], **17)** 'God said that in the last days [of the Jewish nation?] I will pour out My Holy Spirit upon all people [i.e., both Jews and Gentiles], and your sons and daughters will speak out [in prophecies] and your young men will see [supernatural] visions, and your old men will have [supernatural] dreams. **18)** Yes, and I will pour out my Holy Spirit on my male and female [spiritual] slaves in those days so that they will speak out in prophecies. **19)** And I will display miracles in the sky above and [supernatural] signs on the earth below [consisting of] blood, fire and smoky vapor. **20)** [In that day] the sun will become dark and the moon will [appear] as blood. [This will all happen] before the great and wonderful day when the Lord comes. [Note: These last two verse refer to events occurring at the end of time. See Matt. 24:29-30]. **21)** And the time will come when every person who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved' [i.e., whoever appeals to God through obedient faith in Christ].

22) "You people of Israel, listen to this message: Jesus from Nazareth was a man whom God [demonstrated] His approval of by powerful deeds, miracles and [supernatural] signs which He accomplished through Jesus in your very presence --- and you all know this! **23)** Yet, He was handed over to you so that, by lawless men [i.e., the Romans], He was put to death by crucifixion. Now this was all done in harmony with God's full pre-knowledge and [divine] purpose. **24)** But God raised Him up, having released Him from the sharp pains [He experienced when dying], because it was not possible that He could be held in death's grip. **25)** King David said this about Jesus [Psa. 16:8ff], 'I always see the Lord in front of me, He is at my right side for protection; **26)** therefore, I was glad in my heart, and my mouth expressed this [joy]. In addition, my body will live in hope [of being raised] **27)** because you [i.e., God] will not allow my soul [i.e., this is a reference to Jesus] to remain in Hades [i.e., the unseen place of the departed spirits], neither will you allow [the body] of your Holy One to decay. **28)** You have made known to me what life is all about. You will make me completely happy by your very presence.' **29)** Brothers, I would like to speak very plainly about the patriarch David [Note: A patriarch was the ruling father of the family]. He died and was buried and his grave can be seen today. **30)** Since he was a prophet

and knew that God had pledged His word that one of his [i.e., David's] descendants would sit on his throne [as king]; 31) David, foreseeing this, spoke of Christ being raised from the dead. [He said Jesus' spirit] would not be left in the unseen place of departed spirits, nor would His body decay. 32) So, God raised this Jesus up [from the dead] and we [apostles] are all witnesses [of it]. 33) Jesus is [now] exalted at the right side of God, and having received the promised Holy Spirit from His Father, He has poured out what you have seen and heard [here this day]. 34) Now David is not the one who ascended into heaven for he [spoke of Jesus when he] said [Psa. 110:1], 'The Lord [i.e., God] said to my [i.e., David's] Lord [i.e., Jesus], sit at my right side 35) until I put your enemies [in subjection] beneath your feet.' 36) Therefore, let all those who make up the household of Israel [i.e., God's people] know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

37) Now when the people heard this message [of Peter and the other apostles, See verse 14], they were convicted [of its truth] in their hearts and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do [about our condemned condition]?"

38) And Peter replied, "Every one of you must repent [i.e., change your hearts and lives] and be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ [i.e., by His authority] so that your sins will be forgiven [by God] and then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit [to live in your hearts]. 39) For the promise [of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit] is being given to you [Jews] and to your descendants and [also] to all those who are far away [i.e., Gentiles. See Eph. 2:17]. [This promise is] to as many as [respond to] the Lord, our God's call [through the Gospel, See II Thess. 2:14]."

40) So, Peter testified and urged the crowd with many additional words, saying, "Save yourselves from [the condemnation coming on] this sinful generation [by responding to this message]."

41) Then those who responded [by faith] to the words [spoken by Peter and the apostles] were immersed, and about three thousand persons were added to them [i.e., the apostles] on that day.

42) And these [new converts] continued regularly [to listen] to the teaching of the apostles and to share with them; they broke bread [in memory of Jesus] and continued praying.

43) Everyone [who saw this happen] was filled with awe at the many miracles and [supernatural] signs performed by the apostles.

44) And all the believers [in Jesus] were together and shared everything. 45) They sold their belongings and property and divided [the money] among all [the believers] according to each one's need. 46) And every day they continued to meet together in the Temple [i.e., for teaching and worship]. They were enjoying their meals and the close fellowship they shared in the various homes, and were 47) praising God and enjoying favor with all the people [of the area]. And every day the Lord added to their number [i.e., to the church] those who were being saved [i.e., upon their obedience to the Gospel].

CHAPTER THREE

1) Now Peter and John were going to the Temple at three o'clock one afternoon [Note: Jewish time calculations are employed here], during the regular [Jewish] prayer hour. 2) [On their way] they met a certain man who had been crippled from birth. Every day he had been carried [by friends] and placed at the "Beautiful Gate" [as it was called] of the Temple [enclosure] where he begged for money from those entering the Temple. 3) When he saw Peter and John about to enter the Temple he asked them [also] for money. 4) Peter looked directly at the man and, together with John, said [to him], "Look [at me]." 5) And the man responded, expecting to receive some coins from them. 6) But instead, Peter said, "I do not have any money [i.e., silver or gold], but I will give you what I do have. In the name of Jesus from Nazareth [i.e., by His authority], get up and walk." 7) And Peter took him by his right hand and lifted him up. Immediately the man's feet and ankles became strong [enough to walk on]. 8) He [then] jumped up, stood on his feet and began to walk. And [as] he entered the Temple with Peter and John he was able to walk and [even] jump, while praising God [for his complete healing]. 9) And all the people [there in the Temple area] saw him walking and [heard him] praising God. 10) And they recognized him as the same person who had sat at the "Beautiful Gate" of the Temple begging for money, and they were filled with wonder and amazement over what had happened to him.

11) And as this [former] crippled man stayed close beside Peter and John, all the people rushed toward them at "Solomon's Portico" [Note: This was a large covered area, with rows of columns, on the side of the Temple enclosure], completely astonished [at what had happened]. 12)

And when Peter saw [the crowd assembling] he gave this explanation: "Men of Israel, why are you so shocked at [what happened to] this man? And why are you gazing at us, as though it were by our power or godly qualities that we caused him to walk? **13)** The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob --- the God of our forefathers --- has highly honored His servant Jesus, whom you people turned over [to the Roman authorities] and denied [Him freedom] in the presence of [governor] Pilate, who had already decided to release Him. **14)** But you denied the Holy and Righteous One [His rightful freedom] and asked for a murderer to be released to you [instead]. **15)** [Then, at the hands of the Roman authorities] you killed the Prince of [eternal] life, but God raised Him from the dead, and we [apostles] were [reliable] witnesses of it. **16)** And by [means of] the name [of Jesus], that is, by faith in the [power of His] name, this [crippled] man, whom you now see and know, was healed. Yes, it is the faith that comes through Jesus that is responsible for this man's perfect health, as you now all see.

17) "And now brothers, I know that [both] you and your rulers [i.e., the Roman officials] acted in ignorance [of what you were really doing]. **18)** But this is the way God fulfilled the things which He had predicted through the prophets about the suffering of Christ. **19)** Therefore, you people [must] repent [i.e., change your hearts and lives] and turn [back] again [to God] so that your sins will be blotted out and so that you may enjoy times of [spiritual] refreshment from the presence of the Lord [i.e., through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit]. **20)** And [also] that God may send Christ [to you], the One whom He has appointed for your [benefit]. This [is] Jesus, **21)** who must be received into heaven until [God's appointed] times when everything will be restored [to its intended purpose]. God had spoken about this through the proclamations of His holy prophets of long ago. **22)** Moses [expressed it when he] said [Deut. 18:15], 'The Lord God will raise up a prophet for you from among your brothers; He will be like me [in some ways] and you must all pay attention to Him in everything He says to you.' **23)** [Deut. 18:19 says], 'And it will be [at that time] that every person who does not listen to that prophet will be completely destroyed [spiritually] from among [God's] people.' **24)** Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel on down, who have spoken, have predicted these days. **25)** You people are descendants of these prophets and [recipients] of the Agreement God

made with your forefathers when He said to Abraham [Gen. 12:3], 'And through your seed [i.e., your descendant Jesus] all the people of the earth will receive the blessings [of God].' 26) You [Jews] were the first ones to receive this blessing when God raised up [from the dead] His Servant [i.e., Jesus] and sent Him to turn all of you [away] from your sins."

CHAPTER FOUR

1) As they were speaking to the [crowd of] people, the [Jewish] priests, the captain of the Temple [guard] and the Sadducees [i.e., a sect of the Jewish religion] approached them 2) and were greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming that Jesus had been raised from the dead. 3) So, these [Jewish] leaders arrested Peter and John and put them in jail until the next day because it was [already] evening. 4) But many of the people who heard the message [of God] believed [in Jesus] and the number of men [alone] came to be about five thousand.

5) And the next day the [Jewish] rulers, elders and teachers of the law of Moses gathered together in Jerusalem. 6) [They were]: Annas, the head priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and all the head priest's family [members]. 7) And when these men had Peter and John brought before them, they asked, "By whose authority or in what name have you done this thing [i.e., healed the crippled man]?"

8) Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, addressed them, saying, "Rulers and elders of the people, 9) if we are being questioned today concerning how this man with a serious handicap was made completely well, 10) we want you men and all the people of Israel to know that this man was made completely well through the name of Jesus Christ from Nazareth. [He is the One] whom you people put to death on the cross, but God raised from the dead. 11) He is that [Psa. 118:22], 'stone that was rejected by you builders but was made the principal stone by which the entire building is aligned.' 12) And there is salvation in no other One [than Jesus] for there is no other Name in the whole world, proclaimed by men, by which [a person] can be saved."

13) Now when these men saw how boldly Peter and John spoke, and perceived that they were uneducated and [even] ignorant

men, they were quite surprised; then they recognized that they had been with Jesus. 14) And when they saw the healed man standing there with Peter and John, there was nothing they could say [to refute the obvious miracle]. 15) But when the Council [of Jewish leaders] made Peter and John leave [the meeting], they discussed the matter among themselves, 16) saying, "What should we do to these men? For we cannot deny that a significant miracle was performed by them, and everybody living in Jerusalem knows it. 17) But we do not want this [teaching] to spread any further so let us threaten them [and demand] that they do not speak to anyone about Jesus anymore."

18) And so they called Peter and John in and warned them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus [anymore]. 19) But Peter and John replied, "You decide whether it is right before God to listen to you men or to Him; 20) we cannot help but speak about the things we have seen and heard."

21) And when the Council had threatened them some more, they [finally] released them because they could not find any reason to punish them. [Actually] they were worried about how the people felt [about the matter], since everybody was giving honor to God for the miracle that had been performed. 22) Now the man who was healed was over forty years old.

23) So, after Peter and John were released, they went [back to the other disciples] and reported everything the leading priests and elders [of the Jews] had said to them. 24) And when the disciples heard this report they united their voices to God in prayer [saying]: "O, Lord, You made the heaven, the earth, the sea and everything in them. 25) [You] said, through the Holy Spirit and by means of [the inspired writings of] our forefather David, your servant, [Psa. 2:1-2], 'Why did the [unconverted] Gentiles rage [at the Messiah], and the people [of Israel] devise useless plans [for opposing Christ]? 26) The kings of the earth [i.e., Herod and Pilate] took their stand [against Jesus], and the rulers [of the Jews] gathered against the Lord and against His Anointed One [i.e., Christ].' 27) For [truly] it was both Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, who gathered together in this city [of Jerusalem] against your Holy Servant Jesus 28) to do what your plan and wisdom predetermined should happen. 29) So, now Lord, take account of the threats [of these Jewish leaders] and give your servants all the boldness [we need] to speak your message, 30) while you perform

[miraculous] healings and signs and wonders through the name [i.e., by the authority] of your Holy Servant Jesus."

31) And after they had prayed, the place where they were gathered shook, and these disciples were all filled with [the power of] the Holy Spirit and they were able to speak the message of God with boldness.

32) So, the large number of believers were united in heart and soul [i.e., mind and spirit] and not one of them said that anything he owned [really] belonged to him, but they shared all things in common. 33) And the apostles testified concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and the favor [of God] was upon all of them. 34) And no one lacked anything, for all who owned property or houses sold [some of] them and brought the money 35) and gave it to the apostles, who distributed it to each person who had a need.

36) And Joseph, who was called by the apostles, Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), was a descendant of the Jewish tribe of Levi, whose family originated from [the island of] Cyprus. 37) He owned a field, but [due to the great need] sold it and brought the money and gave it to the apostles [for distribution].

CHAPTER FIVE

1) Now a certain married couple named Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of property 2) and brought [only] a part of the selling price and gave it to the apostles; but the man and his wife had kept this a secret. 3) But Peter said to Ananias, "Why has Satan filled your heart [causing you] to deceive the Holy Spirit by keeping back part of the selling price of the land [while representing it as the full price]? 4) While you owned it, was it not yours? Then after you sold it, did you not [still] have control over [what you did with] the money? Why did you decide in your heart to do such a thing? You [really] have not lied to men, but to God [about this matter]."

5) When Ananias heard these words he fell dead [instantly] and his spirit left his body, [causing] everyone who heard [about it] to be gripped with fear. 6) Then young men wrapped up his body and took him out and buried him.

7) About three hours later Sapphira came in, not knowing

what had happened [to her husband]. 8) And Peter said to her, "Tell me, did you sell the land for such and such a price?" She answered, "Yes, we did." 9) Then Peter said to her, "Why did you agree together [with your husband] to put the Holy Spirit of the Lord to the test? Look, the ones who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out [to bury you, too.]" 10) And instantly she fell dead right in front of him, and her spirit left her body. [Just then the] young men came in and found her dead. They carried her out and buried her with her husband. 11) So, the whole church and everyone else who heard about these things were filled with great fear.

12) And many [miraculous] signs and wonders were performed through the apostles' hands in front of the people. And all [the disciples] were united together in "Solomon's Portico" [See 3:11]. 13) But none [of the outsiders] dared to associate with the disciples, yet the [majority of the] people commended them. 14) And more and more believers were [being] added to the [people of the] Lord. 15) [One of the miracles performed was that] sick people were even carried into the streets on beds and couches so that, as he passed them, Peter's shadow would fall on someone [in hope of it producing a miraculous healing]. 16) Large crowds also came from the towns surrounding Jerusalem, bringing people who were sick and those troubled by evil spirits, and all of them were [miraculously] healed.

17) But the head priest and the Jewish sect of the Sadducees became very jealous, 18) and arrested the apostles and put them in jail. 19) But an angel from the Lord one night [miraculously] opened the jail doors and released them, saying, 20) "You men, go and stand in the Temple and speak to all the people words about this Life [i.e., about Jesus]." [See John 14:6].

21) And when the apostles heard this, they entered the Temple about dawn and began teaching [about Jesus].

[A little later] the head priest and the Sadducees [see verse 17] called the Council [i.e., the Sanhedrin] and all of the ruling body of Jewish leaders together and sent to the jail to have the apostles brought in to them [for further questioning]. 22) But when the officers arrived at the jail the apostles were gone, so they returned to the Council and reported, 23) "We found the jail securely locked, with guards on duty at the doors, but when we went inside there was no one there!" 24) Now when the captain of the Temple [guard] and the leading priests heard about this, they became frustrated over how far

this [teaching] would [eventually] spread.

25) [Just then] someone came in and said, "Look, the men you put in jail are [now] standing in the Temple teaching people." 26) [Immediately] the captain, with his officers, went [to the Temple] and brought the apostles back again, but did not use any violence because they feared that the people might stone them.

27) And so they brought them in [to their headquarters] to appear before the Council [for questioning]. The head priest spoke to them, [saying], 28) "We strictly commanded you not to teach in this name [i.e., the name of Jesus] and look [what you have done]; you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you intend to hold us responsible for this man's [i.e., Jesus'] death." 29) But Peter and the apostles answered them, "We must obey God instead of [you] men [in this situation]. 30) The God of our forefathers raised up Jesus [from the dead], whom you put to death by hanging Him on a tree [i.e., the cross]. 31) But God exalted Him at His right side to be a Prince and Savior and to give the people of Israel [an opportunity] to repent [i.e., change their hearts and lives] and [receive] forgiveness of [their] sins [through Him]. 32) We apostles are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to every person who obeys Him."

33) But when the Jewish officials heard this, they were deeply convicted in their hearts and determined to kill the apostles. 34) But [then] Gamaliel, a Council member, who was a Pharisee [i.e., a strict sect of the Jewish religion], and an expert in the law of Moses and highly regarded by all the people, stood up and ordered the apostles to step outside [of the Council meeting] briefly. 35) And he said [to the Council members], "Men of Israel, be careful how you deal with these men. 36) For [remember that] some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be someone [important], and that about four hundred people rallied [to his cause], but he was killed and all his men left him and nothing ever came of it. 37) Later on another man, named Judas of Galilee, appeared during the census [Note: The time and circumstances of this census were probably known to the original readers], and led [a group of] people away after him, but he also was killed and all of his followers were scattered. 38) And so now I say, hold off your accusations and let these men alone, for if their planning and effort is [merely] of human origin, it will be defeated, 39) but if [it happens to be] of God, you will not be able to defeat them. And [if you try to],

you may [actually] be fighting against [the work of] God."

40) And so the Council agreed [with Gamaliel's advice] and when they called the apostles back in, they had them beaten and ordered them never to speak in the name of Jesus [again]; then they released them.

41) When the apostles left the Council meeting, they were rejoicing over being considered worthy to suffer [such] shame for the name [of Jesus]. 42) So, every day, they never stopped teaching and preaching that Jesus was the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one], in the Temple and in private homes.

CHAPTER SIX

1) Now during the days when the disciples were multiplying in number [in Jerusalem. See verse 7], some Greek-[speaking] Jews began to complain to the Hebrews that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution [of food]. 2) So, the twelve apostles called the whole group of disciples together and said to them, "It is not right that we should neglect preaching the word of God in order to serve meals [to people]. 3) Brothers, select from among you seven men with good reputations, who are full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to take care of this matter. 4) But we will continue earnestly in prayer and the preaching of God's word."

5) This arrangement pleased the whole group, so they selected Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolaus, a proselyte [i.e., convert to the Jewish religion] from Antioch. 6) [Then] they presented these men to the apostles, who prayed for them while placing their hands on them [to signify their appointment].

7) So, the message of God increased [in its influence] and the disciples multiplied in number greatly in Jerusalem, [so that even] a large number of [Jewish] priests became obedient to [the message of] the faith.

8) And Stephen [i.e., one of the seven men chosen to minister to widows, verse 5], who was full of [God's] favor and power, performed great wonders and [miraculous] signs in front of the [Jewish] people. 9) But several men from the synagogue, made up of freed slaves from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia and Asia, began arguing with Stephen. 10) But they could not stand up to the wisdom

and [power of] the Holy Spirit by which Stephen spoke.

11) Then they enlisted men to say [i.e., to testify falsely against Stephen, verse 13], "We heard him criticizing Moses and [even] God." 12) And they stirred up the people, the elders and the teachers of the law of Moses and searched for him, seized him and brought him before the Council. 13) They had arranged for the false witnesses to say, "This man will not stop speaking against the Temple and the law of Moses, 14) for we [ourselves] heard him saying that this Jesus from Nazareth would destroy the Temple and change the customs handed down to us by Moses." 15) Then, as all the Council members stared at Stephen, his face appeared to them like an angel's.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1) Then the head priest asked [Stephen], "Are these charges true?" 2) And he answered, "Brothers and fathers, listen to me: Our glorious God appeared to our forefather Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, [even] before he lived in Haran 3) and told him, 'Leave your country and relatives and go to the country where I will lead you.'

4) "So, he left Chaldea [Note: This was another name for Mesopotamia], and lived in Haran, and after his father died he was sent [by God] to this country where you people now live. 5) But God gave him no inheritance [here at that time], no, not even a place [of his own] to stand on. Yet God promised that He would [someday] give it to him and to his descendants after him [i.e., the Israelites], as a [permanent] possession, even though [at that time] he had no child yet. 6) And God had spoken about this [beforehand] by saying that Abraham's descendants would live in a foreign country and that they would [eventually] be ill-treated as slaves for four hundred years. 7) And God said, 'I will judge the nation [i.e., Egypt] that enslaves them and [then] after my people are liberated, they will serve me in this place [i.e., Palestine].' 8) And God gave Abraham the Agreement which required circumcision [as an identifying mark] so when Abraham fathered Isaac he circumcised him when he was eight days old. Then Isaac had a son, Jacob; and Jacob had [as sons] the twelve patriarchs [i.e., ruling fathers of families].

9) "[And when] these patriarchs, [still living in Canaan as

young men], became jealous of [their brother] Joseph, they sold him [as a slave to traveling merchants who took him] to Egypt. But God was with him [during all that time], 10) and rescued him from all his troubles and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him a governor over Egypt and his [i.e., the king's] household.

11) "Now a great famine occurred all over Egypt and Canaan, causing extreme hardships, and our forefathers did not have enough to live on. 12) But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent his sons [down there] on their first trip. 13) On their second trip Joseph identified himself to his brothers, and Pharaoh was made aware of his origins. 14) Joseph then sent [to Canaan] for his father Jacob and all seventy-five of his relatives. 15) So, Jacob went down to Egypt and died there, along with our forefathers. 16) Their bodies were carried back [from Egypt] to Shechem and buried in the tomb that Abraham had purchased in Shechem from the sons of Hamor for a sum of silver. [Note: "Shechem" was a town in Israel, the country which in New Testament times was known as Samaria].

17) "But as the time when the promise [God had made] to Abraham approached [its fulfillment], the number of people [i.e., Hebrews] in Egypt grew 18) until a new king, who had not known Joseph, began to rule. 19) This king exploited the Hebrews and mistreated our forefathers, even requiring that they abandon their [small] babies, leaving them to die [See Exodus 1:22].

20) "It was at that time that Moses was born, and he was a very handsome child. He was cared for in his father's home for three months 21) and then, when he was abandoned [as the Egyptians required], the daughter of Pharaoh took him in and cared for him as her own son. 22) Now Moses was educated according to all the wisdom of the Egyptians and became an accomplished speaker and an effective leader. 23) But when he was about forty years old he felt led to visit his relatives, the Israelites [i.e., called Hebrews at that time]. 24) And when Moses observed one [of his relatives] being mistreated, he came to his defense by hitting the Egyptian, 25) assuming his relatives would understand that God was using him to rescue them [from such abuse], but they did not [seem to] understand. 26) The next day Moses came across a couple of his relatives who were fighting and tried to settle their dispute by saying, 'Brothers, since you are fellow-countrymen, why are you hurting each other?'

27) But the one who was trying to harm his neighbor pushed Moses away saying, 'Who gave you the right to act as a ruler and judge over us? **28)** Are you going to kill me like you did that Egyptian yesterday?' **29)** When Moses heard this, he ran away and traveled to the country of Midian where he settled down and had two sons.

30) "Then after [another] forty years passed, an angel appeared to him [one day] out of a flaming bush in the wilderness near Mt. Sinai. **31)** Moses marvelled at the sight [of the burning bush] and, as he went to look at it more closely, the voice of the Lord spoke out, **32)** 'I am the God of your forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses shook with fear, not [even] wanting to look [at the bush]. **33)** And the Lord said to him, 'Take off your shoes, [Moses], for the place you are standing on is holy ground. **34)** I have surely seen the mistreatment of my people there in Egypt and I have heard their groaning and I have determined to rescue them. Now [get ready], I will send you to Egypt [to lead out in their rescue].' **35)** But the Hebrews refused [to acknowledge Moses as their leader], saying, 'Who made you a ruler and judge [over us]?' [Nevertheless], God sent him [to Egypt] to be both a ruler and liberator [of the people] through the direction of [His] angel who appeared [to Moses] from the bush. **36)** This man led them out [of Egypt], performing wonders and [miraculous] signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years.

37) "This is the Moses who had said to the Israelites [Deut. 18:15], 'God will raise up a prophet from among your countrymen who will be like me [in some ways].' **38)** This is the man who was with our forefathers and with the assembly [of Hebrews] in the wilderness [after] the angel had spoken to him at Mt. Sinai. He [is the one] who received the living messages [from God at Mt. Sinai] and gave them to us. **39)** [And yet] our forefathers refused to obey him, but rejected [his leadership] and turned back to Egypt in their hearts. **40)** They said to Aaron [i.e., Moses' brother], 'Make gods to lead us, because we do not know what happened to this Moses who led us when we first left the country of Egypt.' **41)** And so the people fashioned a calf [out of gold] and offered [an animal] sacrifice to this idol and [then] celebrated joyously over what they had done [See Exodus 32:4-6; 17-19]. **42)** But God turned [away from them] and allowed them to worship heavenly bodies [i.e., stars], just as it was written in the prophet [Amos 5:25ff], 'Did you offer me slain animals

as sacrifices for forty years in the wilderness, you Israelites? **43)** [No], you set up a tent for Moloch [i.e., a heathen idol worshiped by the Ammonites] and [another one for] the star [representing the false god] Rephan and images used in worshiping them. I will allow you to be transported beyond [the country of] Babylon.'

44) "Our forefathers had the Tabernacle of the Testimony in the wilderness [i.e., the tent containing the ten commandments], which God instructed Moses to make according to the model he was shown. **45)** Our forefathers also brought this Tabernacle with them under Joshua's leadership when they entered [Canaan] to occupy the land of these Gentile nations. God removed these nations as our forefathers advanced through the land, up until the reign of King David, **46)** who found favor in God's sight and asked for permission to build a [special] house for the God of Jacob's [descendants] to live in. **47)** But [eventually] it was Solomon who [actually] built this house [for God]. **48)** However, the Highest [i.e., God] does not live in a house made by human beings, as the prophet said [Isaiah 66:1ff], **49)** 'Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footrest. What kind of a house do you plan to build for me? the Lord asked. Or what sort of a place is suitable for me to rest in? **50)** Did I not really make everything [myself]?"

51) "You people are unbending and unrepentant in your hearts and [unwilling to listen with] your ears. You are always resisting [the desires of] the Holy Spirit just like your forefathers did. **52)** Which one of the prophets did your forefathers not persecute? They [even] killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One [i.e., Jesus], whom you people betrayed and murdered. **53)** You received the law that was ordained through [the medium of] angels [See Gal. 3:19] and yet have not obeyed its requirements."

54) Now when the Council members heard these things they were enraged and ground their teeth at him. **55)** But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw God's splendor and Jesus standing at His right side. **56)** He said, "Look, I see heaven opened up and the Son of man standing at the right side of God." **57)** But they shouted loudly and refused to listen, and then all of them rushed at him. **58)** They threw him out of the city and stoned him [to death]. Those who witnessed [the incident] placed their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. **59)** So, they stoned Stephen [to death] as he called out to the Lord, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit [as I

die]." 60) Then he kneeled down and called out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold them responsible for this sin [of killing me]." And when he said this he fell asleep [in death.]

CHAPTER EIGHT

1) And Saul was in full agreement with Stephen being put to death.

And a great persecution broke out against the Jerusalem church, and all the disciples, except the apostles, were scattered throughout the districts of Judea and Samaria. 2) The godly men who buried Stephen's body mourned over his loss very deeply. 3) But Saul brought devastation to the church by entering everyone's house and dragging men and women off to jail.

4) Now the disciples, who had become scattered all over, went everywhere preaching the message [of God]. 5) And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed Christ to them. 6) Great crowds of people joined together in accepting Philip's message when they heard and saw the [miraculous] signs he was able to perform. 7) Evil spirits came out, with loud shrieks, from many persons and large numbers of people were healed of their paralysis and crippled conditions. 8) And there was much rejoicing in Samaria [over the wonderful effects of Philip's ministry].

9) But a certain man named Simon, from there in Samaria, who had been amazing the people with his magical powers, was claiming to be someone great. 10) Everyone, from the least to the greatest [in importance], was being impressed by him. They were saying, "This man is being called Great [and has] power from God." 11) And people were paying attention to him because he had been amazing them with his magic for a long time. 12) When people believed the good news about God's kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ, which Philip was preaching, both men and women were immersed [in water]. 13) And [this] Simon also believed [Philip's message] and was immersed. [After that] he continued [to travel] with Philip and was amazed by the [supernatural] signs and great miracles he saw [him perform].

14) Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had responded to the message of God, they sent Peter and

John to them. 15) When these two apostles had come [to Samaria] they prayed for some [of the disciples] to receive [miraculous power from] the Holy Spirit, 16) for as yet [such power] had not fallen on any of them; they had only been immersed into the name of the Lord Jesus [i.e., with no accompanying miraculous powers]. 17) Then the apostles placed their hands on [some of] them [and prayed, see verse 15] and they received [miraculous power from] the Holy Spirit.

18) Now when Simon saw that through the placing of the apostles' hands [on people] the Holy Spirit was given [Note: The fact that Simon "saw" something happen suggests it was supernatural and therefore highly desirable by Simon], he offered to pay them money [for this power], 19) saying, "Give me also the ability to place my hands on people [and pray] so that they will receive [the miraculous power of] the Holy Spirit." 20) But Peter said to him, "You and your money will both be destroyed for thinking you could buy the gift from God with money. 21) You do not have any share or involvement in this matter because your heart is not right before God. 22) So, repent [i.e., change your heart and life] of such a terrible thing and pray for the Lord to forgive you for even thinking of such a thing. Perhaps He will [if you are really sincere]. 23) For I can see that your life is as bitter gall [i.e., very evil] and you are enslaved by [your] sins." 24) And Simon answered, "[Please] pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said about me will [really] happen."

25) When Peter and John had testified [regarding the truth] and had proclaimed the message of God [to the people] they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the good news [about Jesus] in many Samaritan villages [on their way back].

26) [Meanwhile] an angel [sent] from the Lord spoke to Philip and said, "Get up and travel south on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza; that is a deserted region." 27) So, he went and [eventually] came across a man who was the Ethiopian Queen Candace's treasurer. He was a high official and was also a eunuch [Note: This was a man without normal sexual activity], who had been to Jerusalem to worship [i.e., probably as a Jewish proselyte]. 28) He was returning [to his home in Ethiopia] and was sitting in his chariot [Note: Chariots were stopped on long journeys occasionally for resting, eating, reading, etc.] reading [a scroll of] the prophet Isaiah. 29) The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go on up close to the chariot." 30) So, Philip ran over to it and [when he got near enough] he heard the Ethiopian eunuch reading from Isaiah the

prophet and asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

31) And the man replied, "How can I, except with someone's guidance?" Then he urged Philip to come and sit with him [in the chariot].

32) Now the passage of Scripture he was reading said [Isa. 53:7ff], "He was led out to be slaughtered as a sheep; He made no sound just like a lamb when it was being sheared. **33)** He was subjected to [terrible] humiliation and deprived of justice. Who will [there be to] trace His descendants, since His life was taken from Him, [leaving no posterity]." **34)** The [Ethiopian] eunuch then asked Philip "Please tell me, is the prophet [Isaiah] writing about himself or about someone else?" **35)** So, Philip opened his mouth, and beginning [his message] from this Scripture [passage], he preached to him [about] Jesus.

36) As they [i.e., Philip, the Ethiopian eunuch and his attendants] traveled along they came to a certain [body of] water. The [Ethiopian] eunuch said, "Look, here is [a body of] water, why can I not be immersed [now]?" {{Verse 37) is absent from many manuscripts}}. **38)** So, the eunuch ordered the chariot to be stopped; then both Philip and the [Ethiopian] eunuch went down into the water and Philip immersed the eunuch [into Christ]. **39)** And when they came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit of the Lord directed Philip to go elsewhere and the eunuch did not see him anymore, as he continued on his journey rejoicing. **40)** But [later on] Philip appeared at Azotus and after leaving there he preached the good news [of Jesus] to all the towns along the way until he reached Caesarea. [Note: Caesarea was a town on the west coast of Palestine, named after the emperor Ceasar].

CHAPTER NINE

1) With every breath [it seemed], Saul [expressed his desire] to threaten and murder the Lord's disciples and [even] went to the head priest **2)** to ask for letters [authorizing him to go] to Damascus and to enter [Jewish] synagogues looking for people of "the Way" [Note: This was a designation for Christians at that time]. And if he found any, whether men or women, he would tie them up and take them to Jerusalem. **3)** And when he got close to Damascus, suddenly a [bright, See 22:6] light from the sky shone all around him. **4)** He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you

persecuting me?" 5) Saul replied, "Who are you, sir?" And the voice said, "It is I, Jesus, whom you are persecuting, 6) but get up, and enter the city [of Damascus] and [there] you will be told what you must do."

7) And the men who were traveling with Saul were speechless, having heard the sound, but not seeing anyone. 8) Saul got up from the ground and opened his eyes but could not see anything, so had to be led by the hand into Damascus. 9) For three days he was blind and neither ate nor drank anything.

10) Now [in the meantime] the Lord spoke in a vision to a certain disciple named Ananias [who lived] in Damascus. He called to him by name, "Ananias." "Yes, Lord, here I am" Ananias replied. 11) The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to Straight Street and ask for a person named Saul, from Tarsus, at the home of Judas; you will find him [there] praying. 12) (Now Saul had seen [in a vision] a man named Ananias coming in and placing his hands on him, restoring his sight)." 13) But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many people about how much harm this man has done to your holy people at Jerusalem. 14) And [now] he is here with authority from the leading priests to tie up [and imprison] everyone who calls on your name." 15) But the Lord replied to him, "Go on your way, for Saul is someone I have especially chosen to carry my name to the [unconverted] Gentiles, kings and the Israelites. 16) I will show him how many things he will have to suffer for my name's sake."

17) So, Ananias left and went to Judas' house and placed his hands on Saul saying, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you as you were traveling on the road [to Damascus] sent me so you could receive your sight [back] and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18) And suddenly, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes and his sight was [immediately] restored. So, he got up and was immersed [See 22:16]; 19) then ate a meal and received strength.

And he stayed on for a number of days with the disciples at Damascus. 20) And so Saul began proclaiming that Jesus was the Son of God in the synagogues [of the Damascus area]. 21) And everyone who heard him was amazed and exclaimed, "Is this not the man who tried to destroy all the people who called on [Jesus'] name in Jerusalem and has now come here [to Damascus] for the purpose of arresting them and bringing them before the leading priests?" 22) But Saul was strengthened [spiritually] and proceeded to confound the

Jews living [there] in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

23) And after a number of days had passed [these] Jews conspired together to kill Saul, 24) but he found out about their plan. And so they watched the gates [of the city] day and night [looking for their chance] to kill him. 25) [However], his disciples lowered him in a basket over the [city] wall at night, [so he escaped].

26) And when he came [back] to Jerusalem, Saul attempted to associate himself with the disciples but they were afraid of him [because of his past], and could not believe that he was a [true] disciple. 27) So, Barnabas brought him to the [other] apostles and explained to them how he had seen the Lord [while] traveling on the road [to Damascus] and how he had boldly preached in the name of Jesus in that city. 28) Saul then traveled in and out of Jerusalem with the apostles, 29) preaching boldly in the name of the Lord [and] speaking and arguing with the Greek-[speaking] Jews, but they were out to kill him. 30) And when the brothers [in the Jerusalem church] learned about this, they brought him down to Caesarea and then sent him on to Tarsus, [his home town].

31) So, the church throughout all of Judea, Galilee and Samaria was multiplied in number, enjoyed peace, was built up [spiritually] and lived in awe of the Lord.

32) Then after that, Peter traveled throughout the entire region until he came down to visit God's holy people that lived in Lydda. [Note: This was a town on the west coast of Palestine]. 33) And there he found a certain man named Aeneas who had been [confined to his] bed, paralyzed for eight years. 34) Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ is healing you, so get up and make your bed." And immediately he got up [out of his bed, completely healed]. 35) When everyone who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him [i.e., that the man was healed], they turned [their lives over] to the Lord.

36) Now at Joppa [Note: This was also a town on the west coast of Palestine, today called "Jaffa," and is now a part of Tel Aviv] there was a certain disciple named Tabitha (she was also called Dorcas, which means "Gazelle"). She practiced many good deeds and always gave money to poor people. 37) But as time went on, she became [very] sick and [eventually] died. Her body was washed [by the women attendants] and placed in an upstairs room [during the mourning process]. 38) And since Lydda was very close to Joppa, the disciples [at Joppa], hearing that Peter was at Lydda [See verse 32], sent two men there to

urge him, "Do not delay your coming [here] to us."

39) So, Peter got up and went with them. When he arrived they took him to the upstairs room [where Dorcas' body lay]. All the widows [i.e., her friends] stood near Peter, crying and showing [him] the coats and [other] clothing which Dorcas had made when she was alive. 40) Then Peter asked them all to leave [the room]; he knelt down and prayed over her body, saying, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41) Peter then reached out his hand and raised her up; he called the saints [i.e., God's holy people] and the widows [back into the room] and presented her [to them] alive. 42) And this [miracle] became known throughout all of Joppa and many people believed in [Jesus as] the Lord. 43) And Peter lived for some time in Joppa with Simon, who was an [animal hide] tanner.

CHAPTER TEN

1) Now there was a certain man in Caesarea named Cornelius. He was [a military man] in charge of one hundred soldiers and belonged to the "battalion of Italy." 2) He was very devoted [to his religious principles] and had great respect for God, along with the members of his household. He gave [money] liberally to poor people and prayed to God regularly. 3) About three o'clock one afternoon [Note: This is based on Jewish time calculations; if Roman time were employed, it would have been 9 AM], while he was wide awake, he had a vision in which an angel of God came to him [and spoke his name] "Cornelius." 4) As he stared at [the angel] in fright, he asked, "What is it, Lord?" [Note: The word "Lord" here could also be translated "Sir," and its correct rendering depends on whether or not Cornelius understood the angel to be from God]. And the angel replied, "Your [continual] prayers and [generous] gifts to poor people have not gone unnoticed before God. 5) And now send men to Joppa to get Simon Peter; 6) he is staying with Simon, a tanner [of animal hides], whose house is close to the [Mediterranean] sea."

7) When the angel who spoke with him had left, Cornelius called two of his house servants and a soldier who was devoted [to God], men who worked for him regularly, 8) and after explaining the whole situation to them, he sent them on to Joppa.

9) As they were traveling the next day, and were coming close to the city [of Caesarea], Peter went up about noontime [Note: Or

6 AM if calculating by Roman time], to the top of the house to pray [Note: The roofs of houses were flat areas, often used for resting, meals, prayer, etc.]. 10) He became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while lunch was being prepared he was overcome by a "trance" [i.e., a semi-conscious, vision-like state] 11) and could see the sky open up and a huge sheet-like container being lowered to the ground by its four corners. 12) It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, crawling [reptiles] and birds. 13) A voice then directed Peter with the words, "Get up; kill and eat [one of] them." 14) But Peter answered, "No, Lord, I cannot. I have never eaten any such ordinary or [ceremonially] unfit creatures." 15) So, the voice spoke again, saying, "What God has made [ceremonially] acceptable, you must not consider ordinary [and therefore defiled]." 16) And after this was done three times, the huge sheet-like container was lifted back up into the sky.

17) Now while Peter was much perplexed over the meaning of this vision, the men sent by Cornelius, having learned where Simon [the tanner] lived, arrived at the gate [of his house], 18) and asked if Simon Peter were staying there.

19) While Peter was thinking about [the meaning of] the vision, the Holy Spirit said to him, "Look, there are three men [here] looking for you. 20) Go downstairs and [then] leave with them. Do not worry about anything because I have sent them [to you]." 21) So, Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. Why have you come here?" 22) They said, "Cornelius, a [military] man in charge of one hundred soldiers, [and] a man who does what is right, [and] who respects God and who has a good reputation among all the Jews [who know him], was urged by God through a holy angel to have you come to his house so he could hear you speak [about salvation, See 11:14]." 23) So, Peter invited them to stay [for the night].

The next day Peter got up and went with the men, [who were] accompanied by certain [Christian] brothers from Joppa. 24) The following day they arrived at Caesarea where they found Cornelius, gathered with his relatives and close friends, waiting for them. 25) When Peter entered [the house] Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet [and attempted] to worship him. 26) But Peter lifted him up, saying, "I am just a man, myself."

27) As they talked, Peter went into the house and found many people gathered together [there]. 28) And he said to them, "You

people know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with, or even go near a person from another [i.e., non-Jewish] country, and yet God showed me that I should not consider any person ordinary or [ceremonially] unacceptable. 29) So, I came [here] when I was sent for, without objecting." 30) Cornelius [then] said, "Four days ago, when I was at home, praying at the appointed hour (i.e., three o'clock in the afternoon [See verse 3]), suddenly a man in bright clothing appeared in front of me. 31) He said to me, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and God has taken account of your giving money to poor people. 32) Therefore, send [men] to Joppa and ask for Simon Peter to come to you. He is staying at the house of Simon, a tanner [of animal hides] who lives close to the [Mediterranean] sea.' 33) So, I proceeded to send [my men] for you and you have done the right thing in coming [here]. Now, therefore, we are all assembled here before God, to hear everything you were commanded by the Lord [to tell us]."

34) Then Peter began to speak. He said, "I perceive that God truly does not show favoritism toward anyone, 35) but that whoever respects Him and does what is right, whatever country he may be from, is acceptable to Him. 36) He sent His message [first] to the Israelites; [it involved] preaching the good news through Jesus Christ (who is Lord of all). 37) You yourselves know [all this, and] how this message was proclaimed throughout Judea, having begun from Galilee after the preaching of the immersion [taught and practiced] by John. 38) This message was about Jesus from Nazareth and how God specially chose Him [and signified it] by giving Him the Holy Spirit and power. He traveled all over doing good [for people] and healing everyone who was [being] oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. 39) And we [apostles] are witnesses of all that He did, both in the region where Jews lived and in Jerusalem [as well]. But they killed Him by hanging Him on a tree [i.e., the cross]. 40) However, God raised Him up the third day and made it possible for Him to appear [following His resurrection], 41) not to everyone, but to us [apostles] who were specially chosen by God to be witnesses [of His resurrected body], and to eat and drink with Him after He arose from the dead. 42) And He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He [i.e., Jesus] is the One whom God ordained to be the Judge of people who are [now] alive and those who have [already] died. 43) All the prophets have testified [in their writings], that it is

through the name of Jesus that every person who believes in Him will receive the forgiveness of sins."

44) While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit descended upon all those who were listening to this message [i.e., Cornelius and his household]. 45) And the believers of Jewish descent, who had come with Peter, were amazed [when they saw] that the gift of the Holy Spirit had [now] been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46) For [as evidence of it] they heard them speaking in [other] languages [supernaturally] and lifting up God [in praise].

Peter then said, 47) "Who can keep these people [i.e., Cornelius' household] from being immersed in water now that they have received the Holy Spirit just like we [apostles] have?" [See 2:4]. 48) So, Peter commanded them to be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ. Then Cornelius and his household asked Peter to stay on for a number of days.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) Now the apostles and the [other] brothers in Judea heard that the Gentiles had responded to the message of God. 2) And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those [believers] of Jewish descent began to argue with him, 3) saying, "You went in and ate with non-Jewish people, did you not?"

4) Then Peter began to explain the whole matter to them, step by step, saying, 5) "I was in the city of Joppa and [one day], while praying, I fell into a trance [i.e., a semi-conscious, vision-like state] and saw a huge sheet-like container being lowered down from the sky by its four corners. As it came into view 6) I gazed at it and wondered [about it], as I saw [it full of] fourlegged [domestic] animals, wild animals, crawling [reptiles] and birds of the sky. 7) I also heard a voice telling me to get up and kill and eat [one of them]. 8) But I said, 'O no, Lord, for I have never even tasted anything ordinary or [ceremonially] unfit [for Jews to eat].' 9) Then the voice spoke from the sky again, saying, 'Do not consider something [to be] ordinary that God has made acceptable.' 10) And this was done three times before it was all lifted back up into the sky.

11) "Then, just about that time, two men sent from Caesarea to get me, walked up to the house where we were [staying]. 12) The

Holy Spirit directed me to go with them, without showing any discrimination. With these six brothers accompanying me, we went into Cornelius' house **13)** and he told us about seeing an angel standing in his house and saying [to him] 'Send to Joppa for Simon Peter and bring him [here] **14)** so he can speak words to you that will bring salvation to you and your household.'

15) "And while I was speaking, [the power of] the Holy Spirit descended on them [i.e., Cornelius' Gentile household] just like [it fell] on us [Jewish apostles] at the beginning [i.e., the day of Pentecost, See chapter 2]. **16)** Then I remembered what the Lord had said [See 1:4-5]: 'John immersed you [people] in water but you [apostles] will be immersed in the Holy Spirit.' **17)** [Therefore], if God gave to them [i.e., the Gentiles] the same gift as He gave to us [Jews] when we [apostles, See chapter 1-2] believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, how could I stand against [the will of] God [by refusing to immerse them]?"

18) So, when the apostles and the brothers from Judea heard these things, they stopped arguing [See verse 2] and gave honor to God, saying, '[This means] that God has permitted the Gentiles also [as well as the Jews] to repent [i.e., change their hearts and lives] so they, too, could have [the promise of never ending] life.'

19) Those who were scattered everywhere as a result of the persecution [being waged against the church] because of Stephen's [death], traveled as far away as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, declaring the message to Jews only. **20)** But when some men from Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch, they preached [about] the Lord Jesus to the Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] also. **21)** The power of the Lord was upon their efforts so that a large number of people who believed [the message] turned to the Lord [in faithful obedience].

22) And the news about [what was being done by] these people reached the church in Jerusalem, so that they sent Barnabas up to Antioch [in Syria]. **23)** When he got there and saw how God was favoring the people [with salvation] he was very happy and [stayed on to] encourage everyone to remain close to the Lord with a heartfelt purpose. **24)** [Now] Barnabas was a good man who was full of the Holy Spirit and of faith [in the Lord], and many people were added to the [church of the] Lord.

25) Then he went on to Tarsus to look for Saul [Note: Tarsus was the home town of Saul, who was later called Paul], **26)** and when he found him, he

brought him [back] to Antioch. So, for an entire year Saul and Barnabas gathered the church together and taught many people. [It was] here in Antioch that the disciples were first [divinely] called Christians.

27) During those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28) One of them, a man named Agabus, stood up and indicated by [the direction of] the Holy Spirit that there was going to be a severe worldwide famine, which [actually] took place during the time that Claudius ruled. 29) [In response to this prediction], the disciples decided to send as much relief as they could to help the brothers living in Judea. 30) So, they sent [what was donated] to the elders [of the Judean churches] by Barnabas and Saul.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1) Now about that time King Herod began a persecution of certain people in the [Jerusalem] church. [Note: This man was the grandson of Herod the Great. See Matt. 2:1]. 2) He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. 3) When he realized that this act pleased the Jews, he proceeded to have Peter arrested also. [This happened] during the Festival of Unleavened Bread [See Exodus 12:15ff]. 4) So, Peter was arrested and put in jail with four groups of four soldiers each guarding him. Herod planned to have him brought before the people after the Passover Festival was over.

5) So, Peter was kept in jail, but the church continued to pray earnestly to God for him. [See verse 12].

6) Then on the night that Herod was planning to have him brought [before the court], Peter was asleep, chained between two soldiers, with guards stationed at the jail doors. 7) [Then it happened]: [Suddenly] an angel from the Lord stood beside Peter as a light shone into his cell. [The angel] gently struck his side, waking him up, saying, "Get up quickly." His chains fell from his hands. 8) The angel [then] said to him, "Put on your belt and sandals," so he did. Then the angel said, "Throw your [outer] robe around you and follow me." 9) So, he followed the angel out [of the jail], not fully realizing what had happened, thinking [perhaps] he had seen [all this in] a vision. 10) And when they passed the first two guards, they came to the iron gate leading out into the city, which opened by itself. So, they went out

and, as they walked down the street, the angel [suddenly] left him.

11) Then when Peter realized what had actually happened, he said, "Now I know for certain that [it was] the Lord who sent His angel to rescue me from Herod's custody and from all that the Jewish people had planned [to do to me]." 12) After thinking about the matter [for awhile], he decided to go to the house of Mary, mother of John Mark, where a large gathering [of Christians] was praying. 13) When Peter knocked at the entryway door, a young woman named Rhodda answered. 14) And when she recognized Peter's voice [speaking to her from outside], she ran back in [to where the prayer group was assembled] without even opening the door, and joyously told them that it was Peter [knocking]. 15) And they said to her, "You are crazy." But she insisted that [what she reported] was true. They replied, "It is [only] his angel." 16) But Peter continued to knock and when they [finally] opened [the door] they saw that it [really] was Peter and were amazed. 17) [Upon entering the house] he held up his hand to quiet them, then went on to explain how the Lord had rescued him from jail. He said to them, "[Go] tell all this to James [the Lord's half-brother] and to [the rest of] the brothers." Then he left [them] and went elsewhere.

18) Now as soon as it got daylight there was a lot of commotion among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. 19) When Herod's search for him turned up nothing, he questioned the guards, then ordered them to be led away and executed. He then left Judea and went to Caesarea, where he stayed for awhile.

20) Now Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon [Note: These were seaport cities not under his jurisdiction]. They came to him as a group, having befriended Blastus, an officer of king Herod, and tried to arrange a peaceful relationship [with him] because Judea was dependant on him for their food supply.

21) And then, on a particular day, Herod, dressed in his royal robes, delivered a speech [to the people] from his throne. 22) The people began shouting, "His is the voice of a god and not a man." 23) Suddenly, an angel from God struck him [with a terrible condition] because he refused to honor God [by what he said in his speech], so he was consumed by worms and died.

24) But the [influence of the] message of God grew and [the number of disciples] multiplied.

25) Barnabas and Saul returned [to Antioch] from Jerusalem

after they had fulfilled their mission [i.e., of taking the contribution for the famine-stricken people of Judea. See 11:27-30]. They took John Mark [back to Antioch with them].

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) Now in the church at Antioch there were [these] prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Symeon, called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod the Tetrarch [i.e., governor of Galilee], and Saul. 2) As these men were ministering to the Lord [i.e., this probably means worshiping] and fasting, the Holy Spirit said [to one of them by way of inspiration]: "Set Barnabas and Saul apart for Me, [commissioning them] to do the work for which I have called them." 3) Then, as these prophets and teachers fasted and prayed [for the two men], they placed their hands on them [signifying their appointment for this ministry] and sent them away.

4) So, as they were sent out by [the direction of] the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia [a seaport], and from there they sailed on to [the island of] Cyprus. 5) After arriving at Salamis [a town on the island], they proclaimed the message of God in the Jewish synagogue [there], with John [Mark] attending [to various details of their ministry].

6) When they had traveled across the whole island they came to Paphos [a town on the island of Cyprus]; [there] they met a certain magician named Bar-Jesus, who was a Jewish false prophet. 7) He was with a very intelligent magistrate, [a Roman official named] Sergius Paulus. This man called for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the message of God. 8) But [another] magician, named Elymas (which means "the magician") opposed them, trying to discourage the magistrate from hearing about the faith. 9) But Saul, [now] also called Paul, being filled with [the power of] the Holy Spirit, looked at him intently 10) and said, "You children of the devil; you enemy of all that is right; you are full of deceit and every kind of evil [thing]. When will you stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? 11) Now look, the power of the Lord is coming on you to cause [such] blindness that you will not [even] be able to see the sun for awhile." And immediately a misty darkness fell on him and he kept trying to find people to lead him [around] by the hand. 12) When the magistrate saw this miracle performed, he became a believer [in

Christ] and was [continually] amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

13) Now Paul and his companions sailed from Paphos and arrived at Perga [a town in the province] of Pamphylia. [It was here that] John Mark left the party [of evangelists and attendants] and returned to [his home in] Jerusalem [See 12:12]. 14) Then they traveled on past Perga and arrived at Antioch in Pisidia where they entered the [Jewish] synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. 15) And after the reading of the law of Moses and [the writings of] the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent [word] to Paul and Barnabas, saying, "Brothers, if you [men] have any message that will exhort [or encourage] the people, you may speak."

16) So, Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand [to get their attention], he said, "You Israelites and those who have great respect for God, listen [to me]. 17) The God of Israel chose our forefathers [to be His people] and made them a great people when they lived in Egypt, and with His mighty power He led them out of it. 18) For about forty years He tenderly cared for them in the wilderness. 19) And then He destroyed seven nations in the country of Canaan and gave the Israelites the land as an inheritance for about four hundred and fifty years.

20) "After that He gave the people judges [i.e., local military rulers] until the time of Samuel the [first] prophet [See 3:24]. 21) And after that the people asked for a king [to rule their nation] so God gave them Saul, the son of Kish, from the [Israelite] tribe of Benjamin, who ruled as king for forty years. 22) And when God removed him [from the throne of Israel] He raised up David to be their king. God said about him, 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, to be a man close to my heart [i.e., whom I loved very much] and he will do all that I want him to.' 23) [Now] it was this David's descendant Jesus who was sent to Israel as their Savior, just as God had promised. 24) His coming occurred after John [the Immerser] had preached to Israel that those who repented should be immersed [as evidence that they had done so]. 25) As John was completing his ministry he said [to the great crowds], 'Who do you people think I am? [No], I am not the Messiah. But look, Someone is coming [to Israel] after [I complete] my mission whose sandal straps I am not even worthy to unfasten.'

26) "You brothers, descendants of Abraham's family and those of you who respect God very much, this message of salvation

was intended for us. 27) For the people living in Jerusalem, together with their ruling officials, did not understand [that Jesus was the Messiah] or what the message of the prophets, which is read every Sabbath day, really meant. So, [because of this], they [actually] made these Scripture predictions come true by condemning Jesus. 28) They asked Pilate to have Him put to death, even though they could not find any [legitimate] reason to execute Him. 29) And when they had done everything that was predicted about Him, they took Jesus down from the tree [i.e., the cross] and placed Him in a tomb. 30) But God raised Him up from the dead 31) so that He was seen for many days by those [apostles] who came with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem. These men are now His witnesses before the people. 32) And we bring you good news concerning the promise [God] made to our forefathers 33) and has now fulfilled to [us], their children, in raising up Jesus [to be the Messiah], just as it was written in the second Psalm [2:7]: "You [i.e., Jesus] are my Son; this day I have become Your Father." 34) [Now] in regard to God raising Him up from the dead, never to decay, He said this about it [Isa. 55:3], "I will give you the sacred and certain blessings promised to David." 35) God said in another Psalm [16:10], "You will not allow your Holy One to decay." 36) For David died and was buried with his forefathers and [his body] decayed after he had served his generation according to the purpose of God. 37) But Jesus, whom God raised up [from the dead], never did decay.

38) "Brothers, you should know, therefore, that forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed [to people] through this man [Jesus], 39) and [it is] by Him that every believer is made right with God in every way that he could not have been made right by [observing the requirements of] the law of Moses. 40) Beware that what was spoken by the prophets does not happen to you: 41) [Hab. 1:5 says], "Look, you people who despise [God], and be amazed [at what He can do] and be destroyed [for rejecting Him]; for I [i.e., God] will accomplish such a work during your days that you will not believe [it could happen, even] if someone told you about it."

42) As Paul and Barnabas left [the synagogue], the people urged them to speak [more] about this message the next Sabbath day. 43) Now when the synagogue service was over, many of the Jews and devoted proselytes [i.e., converts to the Jewish religion] followed Paul and Barnabas, who urged them to continue accepting the

unearned favor of God.

44) On the following Sabbath day almost everyone in the town [of Antioch in Pisidia] gathered to listen to the message of God. **45)** But when the Jews saw the large crowds [gathered to hear the Gospel] they became very jealous and took sharp issue with the things Paul said, and [even] spoke against them. **46)** But Paul and Barnabas [continued to] speak out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the message of God be delivered to you [Jews] first. But since you have rejected it and [thereby] consider yourselves to be unworthy of [receiving] never ending life, we [i.e., Paul and Barnabas] will now begin proclaiming it to the [unconverted] Gentiles. **47)** For the Lord commanded us to do this by saying, 'I have appointed you to be a light to the [unconverted] Gentiles, so that you should be [the occasion] for [bringing] salvation to the farthest corner of the earth.'" **48)** And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad and gave honor to the message of God [i.e., they accepted it as true]. And all those who were appointed [by God] to receive never ending life [through faith and obedience] became believers.

49) And the Lord's message was spread far and wide over the entire region. **50)** But the Jews incited the devoted [non-Jewish] women who held respected positions, and the principal men of the city, by stirring up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and [succeeded] in running them out of the region. **51)** But they shook the dust off of their feet against them [i.e., as an expression of contempt for the people's attitude] and went on to Iconium. **52)** But the [newly won] disciples [of the Lord] were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1) It happened in Iconium that Paul and Barnabas [again] entered the Jewish synagogue and presented the message [so powerfully] that a large number of both Jews and Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] became believers. **2)** But the Jews who did not obey [the Gospel message] incited the spirits of the [unconverted] Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. **3)** Paul and Barnabas remained there a long time and spoke [the message] boldly for [or, in the power of] the Lord who gave His approval to the message of unearned favor by allowing [miraculous] signs and wonders to be

performed by them. 4) But the large crowd in the city [who heard them] became divided [over how to respond to it]; some sided with the [unbelieving] Jews and some with the apostles. 5) And when the Jews, along with their rulers and [unconverted] Gentiles, all mounted an attack, intending to stone them, 6) Paul and Barnabas found out about it and escaped to the towns of Lystra and Derbe, in the province of Lycaonia, and elsewhere in the vicinity. 7) There they continued preaching the good news [about Jesus].

8) At Lystra they met a certain man sitting [on the street] who had a crippling handicap in his feet which he had suffered since birth. [It was so severe] he was never able to walk. 9) As he listened to Paul, [the apostle] looked at him intently, perceiving that he had [enough] faith to be fully healed [of his lame condition], 10) so he said loudly, "Stand straight up on your feet." And the man jumped up and began walking.

11) And when the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the dialect of Lycaonia, "The gods have come down to us in human form." 12) So, they called Barnabas, "Zeus," and Paul "Hermes," because Paul was the principal speaker. 13) Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance of the city, brought bulls and wreaths flowers to the gates [of the heathen temple], wanting to offer [animal] sacrifices on behalf of the crowds. 14) But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard about what they were trying to do [to them], they tore their clothes [i.e., as an expression of frustration] and rushed over to the crowd and shouted, 15) "Gentlemen, why are you doing these things? [Do you not know that] we are also human beings with the same kind of feelings that you have? And we are just bringing you the good news that you should turn away from these useless things [i.e., idol worship] and [turn] to the living God, who created the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them. 16) God allowed all nations to go their own way in past generations, 17) and yet He did not leave them without evidence about Himself. He gave you good [things], brought rain from the sky, [provided] fruitful harvests and filled [your bodies] with food and your hearts with joy." 18) And [even though] they said these things, it was difficult to restrain the crowds from offering [animal] sacrifices to them.

19) But Jews came to [Lystra] from Antioch [in Pisidia] and Iconium. When they persuaded the crowds [to reject Paul's message] they stoned him and dragged him out of town, assuming he was dead.

20) But as the disciples stood around [Paul's apparently lifeless body], he [surprisingly] stood up [fully restored to health] and entered the town. On the following day he went with Barnabas to Derbe.

21) When they had preached the good news to that town, and had led many to become disciples, they returned to Lystra, [then] to Derbe, and [then on] to Antioch [in Pisidia]. 22) [Along the way] they strengthened the hearts of the disciples, urging them to continue [to believe and practice] the faith and [explaining] that entering God's [heavenly] kingdom [See II Tim. 4:18] requires enduring many trials. 23) And when Paul and Barnabas had appointed elders [for the churches] in every congregation and had prayed and fasted [over these elders], they committed them to [the care of] the Lord, in whom they had come to trust. 24) Then they traveled through [the rest of] Pisidia until they came to [the province of] Pamphylia. 25) After they had proclaimed the message in [the town of] Perga, [in the province of Pamphylia], they went down to Attalia [a seaport of Pamphylia].

26) And from there they sailed to Antioch [in Syria], from where they had [originally] been committed to God's favor for [carrying out] the work which they had just completed. 27) And when they arrived [in Antioch of Syria] they gathered the church together and reported everything that God had done through them and how He had opened a door [of opportunity] for the [unconverted] Gentiles to [enter] the faith. 28) And they stayed with the disciples [there at Antioch] for quite some time.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1) Certain men [i.e., believers, see verse 5] came down from Judea [to Antioch of Syria] and began teaching the brothers this: You cannot be saved unless you are circumcised according to the custom [required] by Moses. 2) After Paul and Barnabas had a heated debate and argued with these men [over this issue], the brothers [of the Antioch church] decided that Paul and Barnabas, along with certain others, should go up to Jerusalem and discuss the question with the apostles and elders there. 3) So, they were sent on their way with the backing of the [Antioch] church and traveled through both Phoenicia and Samaria, telling them about the conversion of the Gentiles. This brought great rejoicing to all the brothers [who heard about it]. 4) When they arrived in Jerusalem they were welcomed by the church,

together with the apostles and elders, and then reported everything that God had done through their ministry.

5) But certain believers, [who had been] members of the sect called Pharisees [i.e., a strict sect of the Jewish religion], began saying, "It is necessary to circumcise people [see verse 1] and require them to keep [the ordinances of] the law of Moses."

6) So, the apostles and elders [of the Jerusalem church] met together to discuss this problem. 7) And after many questions were asked [about it] Peter stood up and addressed the assembly [including the former Pharisees who were now brothers]:

"Brothers, you are aware that some time ago God decided that, from among your number, it would be through my ministry that the Gentiles would hear and believe the Gospel message. 8) And God, who knows [all people's] hearts, gave His testimony [to their acceptance] by giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us [See 11:15-17]. 9) And He did not discriminate between us [i.e., Jews] and them [i.e., Gentiles], cleansing their hearts [also] by faith [in Jesus]. 10) Why are you putting God on trial by trying to harness the disciples with a burden [i.e., compliance with the law of Moses], which neither our forefathers nor we could possibly bear? 11) For we believe that [both] we [Jews] and they [Gentiles] will be saved in the same way, through the unearned favor of the Lord Jesus."

12) The whole crowd remained quiet as they listened to Barnabas and Paul reporting on the [miraculous] signs and wonders God had performed among the Gentiles through them. 13) Then, after they finished speaking, James [the Lord's brother, See 12:17] spoke up and said,

"Brothers, listen to me. 14) Symeon [i.e., Peter] reported how God first sent [someone to preach] to the Gentiles in order to reach a group of them [with the Gospel message] for His name. 15) And this was predicted by the message of the prophets when they wrote [Amos 9:11ff], 16) 'After these things [have transpired], I will return [to my people] and will rebuild the Tabernacle [i.e., the Temple] of David, which has been destroyed. I will rebuild it from its ruins and reestablish it, 17) so that the rest of mankind, including all the Gentiles [or nations], may seek after the Lord and be called by my name. 18) This is what the Lord said when He predicted these things long ago.' 19) So, my advice is not to make it difficult for those who turn to God from among the Gentiles, 20) but to write [urging] them

to avoid [eating] what is contaminated by [its association with] idol worship, from sexual immorality, from [eating] strangled animals and from [drinking] blood. 21) [For] every city has had for many generations people who proclaim [the teaching of] Moses, reading [his writings] in the synagogues every Sabbath day."

22) Then it seemed wise to the apostles and the elders, [along] with the entire church, to select men from their number and send them with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. So, they chose Judas, who was [also] called Barsabas, and Silas, [who were] principal men among the brothers.

23) This is what they wrote [in the letter]: "[This is] from your brothers, the apostles and elders [of the Jerusalem church]: Greetings to [our] Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. 24) We have heard that certain [men] who left here have been upsetting you people and [even] undermining [some people's] spiritual lives by what they have been teaching. This was done without our authorization [or approval]. 25) So, after we came to full agreement, it seemed wise to us to choose [two] men [See verse 22] to accompany our dear Barnabas and Paul, 26) who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27) Therefore, we are sending Judas and Silas [with them] to tell you [these same] things in person. 28) For it was the judgment of the Holy Spirit, and we agreed, that no greater burden be placed on you people than the following necessary things: 29) Avoid [eating] things sacrificed to idols; avoid [drinking] blood; avoid [eating] things [that were] strangled [to death] and avoid sexual immorality. If you avoid [all] these things, you will be doing well. Goodbye."

30) So, when Paul, Barnabas, Judas and Silas left [the meeting] they went down to Antioch and, after gathering a large group [of the church] together, they presented the letter to them. 31) And when they had read it, the people [of the Antioch church] rejoiced over the encouragement it gave them. 32) And Judas and Silas, who also were prophets, exhorted and strengthened the brothers with many [other] words. 33) After they had spent some time [there at Antioch], the brothers who had originally sent them [to Jerusalem] then sent them back [to Antioch]. A peaceful spirit prevailed [among all of them]. {{Some manuscripts add verse 34) "But Silas decided to stay on [at Antioch]"}}. 35) But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch and, along with a number of other [brothers], taught and

proclaimed the message of the Lord [there].

36) Then after some days Paul suggested to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we proclaimed the message of the Lord, to see how they are doing." 37) Barnabas [agreed, and] wanted to take John Mark [his cousin, See Col. 4:10] with them. 38) But Paul was not at all in favor of taking someone who had left them and refused to continue on in the work [of preaching the Gospel] when they were in Pamphylia. [See 13:13]. 39) A heated discussion developed [over this matter] so that Paul and Barnabas went their separate ways [over it], with Barnabas sailing for Cyprus and taking [John] Mark with him. 40) But Paul chose Silas and, after being commended to the [care and] favor of the Lord by the brothers, he left, 41) traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches [along the way].

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1) When Paul came to Derbe and [then] to Lystra, he met a certain disciple named Timothy, whose mother was a Jewish believer, but his father was a Greek [i.e., Gentile]. 2) This young man had a very good reputation among the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. 3) Paul wanted him to travel with him [on a preaching mission] so he had him circumcised in order to avoid prejudice by the Jews in that area, for everyone knew that his father was a Greek. 4) And as they traveled through the towns [of Asia Minor] they presented [to each church] the requirements they were to observe that had been decided on by the apostles and elders of the Jerusalem church. 5) So, the churches [of the region] were being [spiritually] strengthened in the faith and grew in number daily.

6) And then Paul, Silas, Timothy [and perhaps others by now] traveled through the districts of Phrygia and Galatia [i.e., provinces of central Asia Minor] because [an inspired message from] the Holy Spirit would not permit them to proclaim the message in Asia [i.e., the westernmost province of Asia Minor]. 7) When they came near Mysia [i.e., a northwestern province of Asia Minor] they attempted to travel into Bythinia [i.e., a northern province of Asia Minor] but [an inspired message from] the Holy Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to, 8) so they went on through Mysia and came down

to Troas, [i.e., a seaport on the Aegean Sea, from which they sailed over to Europe]. 9) Then one night [while asleep] Paul had a vision [i.e., an inspired dream] in which a man from Macedonia [i.e., northern Greece] stood in front of him begging, "Come over to Macedonia to help us." 10) After seeing [the man in] the vision, we immediately made every effort to go to Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to proclaim the good news [about Jesus] to the people there. [Note: This is first use of "we" and "us" in the book of Acts and indicates that Luke, the writer of Acts, joined the party at this point. See 1:1 with Luke 1:1-3].

11) After setting sail from Troas we headed straight for Samothrace [i.e., an island in the Aegean Sea] and the next day we went on to Neapolis [i.e., a seaport in Macedonia] 12) and from there to Philippi, a city of the principal district of Macedonia, [which was] a Roman province. We stayed in this city for a number of days.

13) On a [particular] Sabbath day we went outside the city gate to a place beside a river where we thought people gathered for prayer. We sat down and began speaking [about the Lord] to some women who had gathered there. 14) A certain woman named Lydia, from the town of Thyatira, who sold purple cloth [for a living], was there. She was a worshiper of God and when she heard us [telling about salvation through Christ], the Lord opened her heart to respond to the message being spoken by Paul. 15) And when she was immersed [into Christ], along with her household [i.e., possibly relatives and/or employees] she urged us, saying, "If you consider me to be a faithful disciple of the Lord, come and stay at my house." And she insisted that we go [to her house].

16) At a later time, when we were going to that [same] place of prayer, we met a certain young woman who was dominated by an [evil] spirit, [claiming to be] able to tell people's fortunes. This [claimed] power was the source of considerable income for the girl's slave-owner. 17) She followed Paul and us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Supreme God and they are proclaiming to you the way to be saved." 18) And she kept this up for a number of days. But Paul was very disturbed [over what she was doing] and [finally] turned [to her] and said to the spirit [in the girl], "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And the evil spirit did come out [of her] immediately.

19) But when the girl's slave-owners saw that their prospects for income [from her activities] were [now] gone, they grabbed Paul

and Silas and dragged them to the open shopping market, in front of the authorities. 20) And when they brought them before the city officials, they made this charge [against them]: "These Jewish men are causing too much trouble in our city, 21) and they are teaching people to observe customs which we Romans are not permitted to accept or practice." 22) Then the large crowd began attacking them, and the city officials had their clothes ripped off and ordered them to be beaten. 23) After beating them severely, they threw them in jail and ordered the jailor to have them securely guarded. 24) After receiving these orders, the jailor threw them into the maximum security cell and had their feet securely fastened in wooden restraints.

25) But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God while the [other] prisoners listened. 26) Suddenly there was a terrible earthquake which violently shook the foundation of the jail. Immediately all the [cell] doors swung open and everyone's chains fell off. 27) The jailor, who was awakened from sleep [by the commotion] saw the jail doors open so drew his [short] sword and prepared to kill himself, assuming that all the prisoners had escaped. [Note: He would have faced a humiliating execution himself if he had allowed capital offense criminals to escape. With that prospect in view, it was considered honorable by the Romans for a person to commit suicide]. 28) But Paul shouted out, "Do not hurt yourself, for everyone is [still] here." 29) The jailor called for torches [to be brought], then rushed in [to the cell block], shaking with fear, and fell down [on his knees] before Paul and Silas. 30) After bringing them out [of the jail area] he said, "Sirs, what do I have to do to be saved?" 31) Paul and Silas said, "You and your family can be saved if you [all] believe in the Lord Jesus." 32) Then they [continued to] speak the message of the Lord to him and everyone [else] in his household. 33) The jailor immediately took Paul and Silas, and cleansed [and soothed] their wounded [backs] and then he and his [believing] household were immersed [into Christ]. 34) Then he brought them up into his house and prepared a meal for them. So, he and everyone in his household, who had believed in God [and were immersed], rejoiced greatly.

35) The next morning the city officials sent their officers [to the jailor] with the message, "Release those men." 36) The jailor then informed Paul [of the officials' decision], saying, "The city officials have decided to release you so you may leave the jail [if] you go peacefully." 37) But Paul responded to the officials, "These city

officials had us innocent Roman citizens publicly beaten and thrown in jail. Are they now trying to release us privately? No indeed! Let the officials themselves come and [publicly] release us."

38) So, the officers reported what Paul had said and the city officials became fearful when they learned that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. 39) So, they came and appealed to them [to leave peacefully]. Then the authorities themselves accompanied them out [of the jail] and asked them to leave the city. 40) When Paul and Silas left the jail they went to Lydia's house and, after seeing the brothers [gathered there] and encouraging them, they went on their way.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1) Now when they [Note: A change from the use of "we" to "they" suggests that the writer Luke remained behind in Philippi at this point] had traveled through the [Macedonian] towns of Amphipolis and Appolonia, they came to [the city of] Thessalonica where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2) As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, [and] for three Sabbath days [in a row] he taught them from the Scriptures, 3) explaining and declaring that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and [then] rise again from the dead. Paul was saying, "This Jesus, whom I am proclaiming to you, is the Christ." 4) Some of the Jews were convinced [that Jesus was the Messiah] and so joined with Paul and Silas. Also, a large number of devoted Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] and leading women [joined their group].

5) But [other] Jews became jealous and, recruiting certain ungodly riffraff, they gathered a mob and brought the city to near-riot conditions. They [even] attacked Jason's house and attempted to bring Paul and Silas before the [assembly of] people. 6) When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials and shouted, "These men have turned the world upside down [i.e., disrupted society by their preaching] and have [now] come here also [i.e., to do the same thing in our community]. 7) Jason has welcomed them and [now] all of them [i.e., Paul, Silas, Jason and the others] are going against the [Roman] laws of Caesar by saying that someone else is [our] king; that Jesus is [king]!" 8) When they heard [these charges] the crowds and [even] the city officials became very disturbed [by the situation stirred up by the Jews]. 9) They made Jason and the others post bail, then released them.

10) The brothers [then] immediately sent Paul and Silas away at night to Berea [i.e., a town in Macedonia]. When they got there they went into the Jewish synagogue. 11) Now these people [in Berea] had more character than those in Thessalonica because they [not only] received the message with an open mind but [also] examined the [Old Testament] Scriptures to see if what they had heard was really true. 12) Many people therefore became believers [in Christ], including a number of leading Greek women and also a number of men.

13) But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that Paul was proclaiming the message of God at Berea also, they went there too, and incited and upset the crowds. 14) So, immediately the brothers sent Paul clear over to the coast, while Silas and Timothy remained there [at Berea]. 15) But those who escorted Paul took him to Athens [i.e., in Greece] and, after being directed to have Silas and Timothy join him there as soon as possible, they left.

16) Now while Paul was waiting for them [to arrive] in Athens, he was deeply stirred in his spirit when he saw the city so full of idols. 17) So, he debated in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing people [i.e., Gentiles proselytes], as well as in the open shopping market with others who met with him there. 18) Also certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers approached him for discussion. Some asked, "What will this know-it-all have to say?" Others said, He seems to be advocating [a belief in] some different gods." [They said this] because he was proclaiming Jesus and the resurrection [of the dead]. 19) So, they led him to the Areopagus [i.e., an elevated assembly place called "the hill of Mars"] and asked him, "Could we learn [more] about this new teaching you are speaking of?" 20) You are telling us some very unusual things and we would like to know what they mean." 21) (Now the local people of Athens, along with foreigners who lived there, spent [about] all their time telling about or listening to some new idea.) 22) Then Paul stood up in the Areopagus and said, "You men of Athens, I noticed that you are an extremely religious people in all your ways [See verse 16]. 23) For as I traveled along [your streets] and observed what you are worshiping, I saw an altar with the inscription: [DEDICATED] TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So, what you are worshiping ignorantly is what I am telling you about. 24) The God who made the world and everything in it, who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in

hand-made temples. 25) Neither is He waited on by men's hands as though He needed anything, since it is He who gives to all people their life and breath and everything [they need]. 26) He made every race of people, living throughout the earth, from one [family] and determined when [they would rise in history] and where they would live. 27) He wanted these people to search for God in hope that, by groping for Him, they might [eventually] find Him, even though He is not [really] very far from [any of] us. 28) For in [the strength of] God we [all] live, move around and have our [personal] identity, just as a certain one of your [Athenian] poets [once] said, 'For we too are His children.' 29) Since therefore we are God's children, we should not think that the Deity is like gold, silver or stone, to be carved [into an idol] by the design and skill of men. 30) Now God made allowance for the times when people were still uninformed [about His complete will], but now [in the Gospel age] He requires all people everywhere to repent [i.e., change their hearts and lives]. 31) For He has appointed a [certain] day when He will judge the people of the world according to [a standard of] true justice by the man [i.e., Jesus] whom He has appointed [as Judge, See II Tim. 4:8]. [And] He has given assurance to all people [that He will do this] by raising Jesus from the dead."

32) Now when the people heard about the resurrection from the dead, some of them made fun of it, but others said, "We would like to hear [more] from you about this again." 33) So, Paul left [the Areopagus]. 34) But certain men continued to listen to him and became believers [in Jesus]. Among them was Dionysius [an official] of the Areopagus, a woman named Damaris and others with them.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1) After this happened Paul left Athens and went to Corinth [i.e., a principal city of Greece]. 2) There he met a certain Jewish man named Aquila, a native of Pontus, [in northern Asia Minor] who, with his wife Priscilla, had recently come from Rome. Paul met this couple 3) and, because they followed the same trade of tentmaking, he stayed with them and went to work [for them]. 4) Every Sabbath day Paul held discussions in the synagogues, trying to convince [both] Jews and Greeks [i.e., Gentiles, that Jesus was the Messiah.]

5) But when Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia [i.e., from the town of Berea], Paul began devoting his full time to declaring the message to Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 6) When the Jews resisted [Paul's efforts] and spoke against him and his message, he shook out his clothing [i.e., an expression of rejection and contempt] and said to them "Let your blood be on your own heads [i.e., you are responsible for whatever harm comes from your action]; I am not responsible. From now on I will go [and preach] to the Gentiles [only]."

7) So, he left [this assembly of Jews] and went to the house of a certain man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was right next door to the synagogue. 8) Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, and all of his family became believers in the Lord. [And] many of the Corinthians who heard [Paul's message] believed [in the Lord] and were immersed [into Christ].

9) Then the Lord spoke to Paul in a night vision [i.e., a divinely given dream]: "Do not be afraid, but speak up and do not hold [anything] back, 10) for I will be with you [See Matt. 28:20] and no one will attack you or hurt you, for I have many people in this city [i.e., who will be converted]." 11) So, Paul lived there [in Corinth] for eighteen months, teaching God's message among the inhabitants [of the city.]

12) But when Gallio was magistrate of Achaia [i.e., the southern province of Greece] the Jews joined forces to attack Paul and brought him before the court of justice, 13) and said [about him], "This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law of Moses." 14) When Paul was about to respond [to this charge], Gallio said to the Jews, "[My] Jewish [constituents], if it were a simple case of wrongdoing or some serious crime, there would be good reason for me to consider your charge [against this man]. 15) But if it is only a dispute over words, titles and your [religious] law, tend to it yourselves; I refuse to pass judgment on such [trivial] matters." 16) And he had them thrown out of the courtroom. 17) Then, all of them [Note: This "all" could refer to the Greeks, the Jews or the Roman officers. Since the text does not specify, it seems most reasonable to suggest it was the Romans] grabbed Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the court of justice. But Gallio showed no interest in the whole affair.

18) After this [incident] Paul remained [in Corinth] for some

time before leaving the brothers and sailing for Syria with Priscilla and Aquila. Paul shaved his head while in Cenchrea as part of a vow he had taken. 19) When they arrived at Ephesus, Paul left Priscilla and Aquila there. He then went into the [Jewish] synagogue and held discussions with the Jews. 20) When they asked him to stay [and continue the discussions] longer, he declined. 21) So, he left them, saying, "I will come back to you if it is God's will." Then He sailed from Ephesus.

22) And when he landed at Ceasarea, he went up [Note: This would mean either up to Ceasarea or up to Jerusalem] and greeted the church [there], then went down to Antioch [in Syria]. 23) After spending some time there, he left and traveled through the district of Galatia, [and] then through Phrygia, strengthening [spiritually] all the disciples [along the way].

24) Now a certain Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria [Egypt] and an effective speaker, who was well-grounded in the [Old Testament] Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25) He was a man who had learned the way of the Lord, and with spiritual fervor, taught accurately [what he knew] about Jesus, although he knew [and had received] only the immersion [taught and practiced] by John. 26) He began speaking boldly in the synagogue and when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and proceeded to explain to him God's way more accurately [than he had known]. 27) And when he desired to travel over into Achaia, he was encouraged [to do so] by the brothers, who wrote to the disciples [in Achaia and urged them] to welcome him. When he arrived [in Achaia] he was a great help to those who had become believers through the unearned favor of God. [Note: An alternate meaning is, "he was a great help, through God's unearned favor on him to those who had become believers"]. 28) For Apollos effectively refuted [the position of] the Jews, publicly proving, by using [Old Testament] Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

1) Then, while Apollos was [still] at Corinth, Paul traveled through the [western] districts and came to Ephesus where he found some disciples. 2) He asked them, "Did [any of] you receive the [indwelling] Holy Spirit when you became believers [in Jesus]?" They answered him, "No, we have never [even] heard that there was

a Holy Spirit." 3) Paul [again] asked, "Into what were you immersed then?" They answered him, "Into John's immersion." 4) Paul [then] said, "John immersed people who [demonstrated their] repentance, telling them they must believe in Jesus, the One who would come after him." 5) When they heard this they were immersed into the name of the Lord Jesus. 6) Then Paul placed his hands on them and [the supernatural power of] the Holy Spirit came on them and they [began to] speak in [other] languages and prophesy [i.e., speak God's message]. 7) The total number [of those immersed] was twelve men.

8) Paul went into the Jewish synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, discussing and convincing people about matters regarding the kingdom of God. 9) But some became stubborn and refused to obey [the message], saying false things about "the Way" [Note: This was a term used to designate the early church] in front of the large crowds. So, Paul left [the synagogue] and took the disciples and began holding discussions every day at Tyrannus' school [house]. 10) This continued for two years so that all the Jews and Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] who lived in [the province of] Asia heard the message of the Lord.

11) And God performed special miracles through the hands of Paul, 12) such as sick people, who were given hand towels or [leather] aprons that had touched Paul's body, being healed from diseases and delivered from evil spirits.

13) But certain traveling Jews, who practiced exorcism, decided that they too would attempt to speak the name of the Lord over people dominated of evil spirits while saying, "I command you [evil spirits to come out] by [the authority of] Jesus whom Paul preaches." 14) [Now] the seven sons of a Jewish leading priest named Sceva were doing this. 15) [On one occasion] the evil spirit replied, "I know Jesus and I know Paul, but who are you?" 16) The man with the evil spirit then jumped on all of them, took control, then overpowered them so that they ran out of the house with their clothes torn off and badly beaten.

17) When this incident became known to all of the Jews and Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] who lived in Ephesus, they became fearful and the name of the Lord Jesus was regarded with honor. 18) Many of the believers also came confessing their sins and describing what they had [previously] done. 19) And a large number of them, who had been involved in occultic practices, brought their books [on the

occult] and began burning them publicly. When they calculated the cost [of the books] it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver [Note: The actual amount was approximately 150 years of a farm laborer's pay, or over 3 million dollars in 1994]. **20)** So, the message of the Lord spread widely and had a great influence [over people].

21) After these things happened Paul decided to travel through Macedonia and Achaia on his way to Jerusalem. He said, "Then, after I have been there I want to visit Rome also." **22)** After sending his two associates Timothy and Erastus on to Macedonia [Note: These were men who cared for various needs of his ministry], Paul remained in [the province of] Asia for awhile.

23) About that time a large disturbance arose [in Ephesus] concerning "the Way." **24)** [Here is what happened]: A certain manufacturer of silver objects named Demetrius, who made silver replicas of the temple of Artemis [i.e., a Greek goddess], brought much business to his workmen. **25)** He called a meeting of his men and others involved in the same work and said to them, "Fellows, you know that we have made a good living from this work [of making temple replicas]. **26)** And now you have seen and heard, not only here in Ephesus, but throughout almost all of [the province of] Asia, that this Paul has been convincing people, [even] to the point of turning many away [from idol worship]. [He is] saying that hand-made gods [like we make] are not real [gods at all]. **27)** And not only is there a [real] danger that our trade will be discredited but also that the temple of our great goddess Artemis will be considered worthless and that even she [herself] will be dethroned from her magnificent place of being adored by all [in the province of] Asia and the world." **28)** When they heard this they became extremely angry and shouted out, "Great is [the goddess] Artemis, of the Ephesians." **29)** The city became full of confusion; they grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's Macedonian traveling companions, and everyone together rushed into the amphitheater. **30)** And when Paul decided to go before the crowd [to talk with them], the disciples would not allow him. **31)** Some of his friends, who were officers in the province of Asia, sent word urging him not to take a chance by entering the amphitheater. **32)** Some [in the crowd] were shouting one thing and some another; there was mass confusion, with most of the people not [even] knowing why they had assembled. **33)** [It appears that] Alexander was appointed out of the crowd by the Jews [i.e., to be their spokesman in defending

them from the charges being made against Paul]. He motioned with his hand [to get attention] and attempted to speak to the assembly in defense [of the Jewish viewpoint]. 34) But when the crowd realized that he was a Jew, they all joined together for about two hours shouting, "Great is [the goddess] Artemis, of the Ephesians." 35) When the town clerk had quieted down the crowd, he said, "You people of Ephesus, who among you does not know that the city of Ephesus is caretaker of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell down from the sky? 36) Since no one can [really] say anything against these things, just calm down and do not do anything foolish. 37) For you have brought these men here --- [men] who have neither desecrated our temple nor defamed our goddess. 38) If therefore Demetrius, and the workmen associated with him, have a charge against anyone, the courts are open and there are magistrates [to judge such cases]; let them file their charges against each other. 39) But if you want to address other matters, they can be settled in the regular, scheduled assembly. 40) For we are truly in danger of being accused of inciting a riot here today when there is [really] no reason for it to happen. Then concerning this problem, we will not be able to explain how it all came about." 41) And after the town clerk had said all this, he dismissed the assembly.

CHAPTER TWENTY

1) After the commotion died down, Paul sent for the [Ephesian] disciples and encouraged them before he left, [heading west] for Macedonia. 2) And when he had traveled through those districts and had delivered many messages of encouragement, he went on [south] into Greece, 3) where he spent three months. Then, just as he was about to set sail for Syria, Paul discovered that a plot was being laid against him by the Jews, so he decided to return through Macedonia. 4) The following men accompanied Paul as far as [the province of] Asia [where Phillipi and Troas were located]: Sopater, the son of Pyrrhus, of Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus, of Thessalonica, Gaius, of Derbe; Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from [the province of] Asia, [seven in all]. 5) These [men] had gone ahead and were waiting for us [when we arrived] in Troas [i.e., a seaport town near Philippi]. [Note: The use of "us" begins here again,

suggesting that the writer Luke rejoins the party at Philippi. See next verse]. **6)** And we [ourselves] sailed away from Philippi after the Festival of Unleavened Bread [Note: This was the Jewish feast commemorating deliverance from Egyptian bondage], and five days later [we] joined them at Troas [i.e., the seven men mentioned in verses 4 and 5], where we remained for seven days.

7) And on the first day of the week [i.e., Sunday], when we [disciples] had gathered together to break bread [i.e., the Lord's Supper See I Cor. 11:20-24], Paul delivered a message that lasted until midnight, [since] he was planning to leave [Troas] the next day. **8)** Now there were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. **9)** A certain young man, named Eutychus, fell sound asleep while sitting on an [open] window ledge [during the message]. Since Paul's message continued [until near midnight] Eutychus was overcome by sleep and fell from the third floor to his death. **10)** Paul hurried downstairs and placed himself on the young man and held him closely, saying [to the people gathered around], "Do not be upset, he is alive." **11)** After that Paul went upstairs, broke bread and ate [a common meal]. [Following the meal] Paul talked with them for a long time, even until it got daylight, and then he left. **12)** [In the meantime] they brought the young fellow [back upstairs] alive, and were greatly comforted.

13) But we went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos [i.e., a seaport town near Troas], where we expected to take Paul on board. This is how Paul had planned it, intending to go there himself by land. **14)** When he met us at Assos, we took him on board, then [together] we went to Mitylene [i.e., a town on a nearby island]. **15)** And after leaving there, the next day we sailed past Chios [i.e., another small island on the way], and the next day past Samos [i.e., another small island], until [finally] on the following day we arrived at Miletus [i.e., the seaport town for Ephesus]. **16)** For Paul had decided to sail on past Ephesus so he would not have to spend any time in [the province of] Asia, because he was hurrying to get to Jerusalem in time for the Day of Pentecost, if at all possible.

17) And from Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus, requesting that the elders of the church [there] come to him. **18)** And when they arrived, he said to them, "You [men] know the kind of life I lived when I was with you, from the [very] first day I set foot in [the province of] Asia. **19)** [You know that] I served the Lord with humility, with tears and with trials, that I experienced as the result of

plots by the Jews. 20) [You know] how I held back nothing in declaring to you whatever was profitable, and taught you in public [meetings] and in your homes. 21) [You know how] I testified to both Jews and Greeks [i.e., Gentiles], that they must repent [i.e., change their attitudes and behavior] toward God, and have faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

22) "And now, look, I am going to Jerusalem, impelled by the Holy Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me [when I get] there, 23) except that the Holy Spirit reveals to me in every city [I visit] that chains and persecutions await me there. 24) But I do not consider my life to be of value, as precious to me, [when compared to the importance of] accomplishing my task and the mission I received from the Lord Jesus to declare the good news of God's unearned favor [through Christ]. 25) Now look, I know that none of you, among whom I traveled on preaching missions, will ever see my face again. 26) Therefore, I [must] declare to you today that I am not responsible for what happens to any of you. 27) For I held nothing back in declaring to you the entire message of God. 28) So, pay close attention to your [own] lives, and to all [members] of the flock [i.e., the congregation] of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers [i.e., elders, shepherds or pastors]. Provide [spiritual] food for the church of the Lord which He purchased by [shedding] His own blood. 29) [Because] I know that after I am gone [from here] there will be vicious wolves [i.e., ravaging false teachers] who will come in among you, and they will not spare the flock [i.e., the congregation]. 30) [Indeed, even] from among your own selves [i.e., the body of elders there in Ephesus] some men will arise and, by speaking false things, they will lead away the disciples, [influencing them] to follow them. 31) So, be very watchful, and remember that for three years I never stopped warning every one of you [about such matters] both night and day with tears [in my eyes].

32) "Now I commit you [elders] to God and to the message of His unearned favor which can build you up [spiritually] and provide you with the inheritance [of never ending life], along with others who are [specially] set apart [for God]. 33) [You know that] I had no greedy desire for anyone's silver, gold or clothing. 34) You [also] know that I worked with my own hands to provide not only my own needs, but the needs of those who were with me. 35) I have demonstrated before you a [good] example in all [these] things, so

that you [too] will work hard to help those who are [physically] weak. [Also] remember the words of the Lord Jesus who Himself said, 'It is a greater blessing [for you] to give [to people's needs] than to receive [help yourselves].'"

36) After speaking these things Paul knelt down and prayed with all of the elders. 37) And when they all had a good cry, they embraced Paul and kissed him. 38) What saddened them most of all was when Paul said that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to his ship.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1) After we had [reluctantly] left [the Ephesian elders] and set sail, we traveled straight [south] to Cos [i.e., a small island] and the next day to Rhodes [i.e., another island], and from there on to Patara [i.e., a seaport town on the southern coast of the province of Asia Minor]. 2) Here we found a ship heading across [the open sea] for Phoenicia, boarded it and sailed away. 3) When we sighted Cyprus [i.e., a large island], we sailed past it on our port side and arrived at Tyre [i.e., a major seaport] in Syria [i.e., on the east coast of Palestine], where the ship was to unload its cargo. 4) When we located the disciples [there] we stayed [with them] for seven days. They advised Paul, through [inspired revelations from] the Holy Spirit, not [even] to set foot in Jerusalem. 5) When we had completed preparations for the next day's voyage we left, and headed out [to sea] on our journey. All the disciples, together with their wives and children, escorted us out of the city and knelt down and prayed with us as we said goodbye to each other. 6) Then we went aboard the ship while the disciples returned home again.

7) When we completed our voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais and greeted the brothers there, then stayed with them for a day. 8) The next day we left and came to Caesarea, where we went to the house of Philip, the evangelist, who had been one of the seven ["deacons" chosen by the Jerusalem church to minister to widows, See Acts 6]. We stayed with him [while there]. 9) This man had four unmarried [i.e., virgin] daughters who were female prophets [i.e., they spoke by inspiration].

10) As we waited there for a number of days, a certain

prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11) When he met with us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet [with it], and said, "The Holy Spirit has revealed [to me] that the man who owns this belt will be tied up like this by the Jews in Jerusalem and will be turned over to the Gentiles." 12) When we heard these things, both we and those who lived there [i.e., Philip, his daughters and local disciples] urged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. 13) [But] Paul answered, "What are you trying to do [by your] crying and breaking my heart, [like this]? [Do you not know that] I am ready, not only to be chained up, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus?" 14) And when he could not be dissuaded [from going to Jerusalem] we stopped [trying to convince him], saying, "Let the Lord's will be done in the matter."

15) After these days we packed up our belongings and went up to Jerusalem. 16) Some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us also, bringing with them Mnason from Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to live [while in Jerusalem].

17) And when we came to Jerusalem, the brothers [there] welcomed us gladly. 18) The next day Paul went with us to visit James [the Lord's brother and a leader in the Jerusalem church], with all of the elders [of the Jerusalem church] being present. 19) And after greeting them Paul reported one by one the things that God had brought about among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20) And when they heard [all] this, they gave honor to God, then said to Paul, "Brother, you can see how many thousands of Jewish believers [in Christ] there are [everywhere] and all of them are eager to observe the [requirements of the] law of Moses. 21) Now these Jewish Christians have been informed that you are teaching all the Jews living among the Gentiles to give up [following the teaching of] Moses, [even] telling them not to circumcise their children and not to practice the [other] customs [of the Jewish religion]. 22) What do you think will happen when they hear that you have come [here to Jerusalem]? 23) So, here is what we would like you to do: We have four men who have made a vow [i.e., a special promise to God]. 24) Take these men and observe the ceremony of purification with them, pay their expenses so they can shave their heads [i.e., to signify that they are making a vow] and [then] everyone will know that there is no truth in what people have been told about you, but that you, too, are living properly and observing the law of Moses. 25) But concerning Gentile

believers, we wrote [to them] our decision, that they should avoid [eating] things sacrificed to idols, from [drinking] blood, from [eating] what is strangled and from sexual immorality."

26) Then Paul took the men and the next day he observed the ceremony of purification with them. Then he went into the Temple, declaring [to the priest] when he would fulfill the [required] days of the purification [ceremony] and [be ready] for the sacrifices to be offered for each of them.

27) When the seven days [required by the vow] were almost completed, the Jews from Asia saw Paul in the Temple. They incited the whole crowd and took hold of him, 28) shouting, "[You] Israelites, help [us]! This man is teaching people everywhere [to be] against our people [i.e., the Jews], the law of Moses and this place [i.e., the Temple]; and in addition to that he has also brought Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] into the Temple and has [thereby] contaminated this holy place." 29) (For the Jews had previously seen him on a city street with Trophimus, the Ephesian, whom they assumed Paul had taken into the Temple [with him]).

30) [So], the entire city was stirred up, and the mob rushed together and attacked Paul, dragging him out of the Temple. Immediately the [Temple] doors were closed [i.e., to secure it from further intrusion]. 31) And as they were attempting to kill Paul, the commander of the military unit was informed that the entire city of Jerusalem was rioting. 32) So, immediately he rushed down on the people with his soldiers and officers, and when the mob saw the commander and his soldiers [coming], they stopped beating Paul. 33) Then the commanding officer approached Paul, took hold of him and ordered him to be secured with two chains. He then questioned him as to who he was and what he had done. 34) From the crowd, some shouted one thing and some another. When the commander could not hear what was being said because of the noise, he ordered Paul to be taken into the battalion headquarters. 35) When they got to the stairway [of the headquarters building] the soldiers had to carry Paul because of the [unrestrained] violence of the mob, 36) for the crowds that followed were [pressing in on them] shouting, "Kill him."

37) As Paul was being brought into the headquarters building, he said to the commander, "Can I speak with you?" The commander replied [with surprise], "You know the Greek language? 38) Are you not the Egyptian who, awhile back, stirred up a revolt

and led four thousand of the 'Dagger Men' out into the wilderness?"

39) Paul answered, "[No], I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of an important city, and I beg you to allow me to speak to these people."

40) And when the commander gave him permission, Paul stood on the stairway and motioned to the people with his hand [for attention]. When they completely quieted down, he spoke to them in the Hebrew [i.e., Aramaic] language, saying,

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1) "Brothers and fathers, listen to the defense I want to make to you."

2) And when they heard him speaking in the Hebrew language, they listened all the more quietly. So, he continued, 3) "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, in Cilicia, but raised [here] in this city [i.e., Jerusalem]. [I was] instructed by Gamaliel [i.e., a renowned Jewish rabbi of the time] according to the strictest methods of observing the law of our forefathers. [I was very] eager to serve God, just as all of you are here today. 4) And I persecuted this 'Way' [even to the point of] putting people to death. [I had] both men and women bound [in chains] and locked up in prisons. 5) The head priest can also verify all this, and so can the body of [Jewish] elders. They furnished me with letters to our fellow-Jews in Damascus, to which I also traveled to bring people back here to Jerusalem, bound in chains to be punished.

6) "And then it suddenly happened, about noon, as I was traveling and got close to Damascus, that this brilliant light from the sky flashed all around me. 7) I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' 8) I answered, 'Who are you, sir?' And the voice answered me, 'I am Jesus from Nazareth, the One you are persecuting.' 9) Those who accompanied me saw the light clearly, but did not hear the voice of the one speaking to me. 10) Then I asked, 'What am I to do, Lord?' And the Lord replied to me, 'Get up, go into Damascus and there you will be told everything [I have] appointed for you to do.' 11) And since I could not see [anything] because of the brilliance of the light, I had to be led by the hand of those with me into Damascus.

12) "[Then] Ananias, a man who was devoted to [observing] the law of Moses and who had a good reputation among all the Jews who lived there, 13) came and stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, regain your sight.' And at that very moment I looked at him [fully able to see again]. 14) And he said [to me], 'The God of our forefathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One [i.e., Jesus], and to hear His voice [speaking to you]. 15) For you will be His witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. 16) So now, what are you waiting for? Get up and be immersed [into Christ], and have your sins washed away as you appeal to His name [i.e., to Christ's authority].'

17) "And it happened that when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the Temple, I fell into a trance [i.e., a semi-conscious vision-like state]. 18) And I saw [and heard] the Lord saying to me, 'Hurry up, get out of Jerusalem quickly, because the people [here] will reject your testimony about me.' 19) And I replied, 'Lord, they know very well that I am [the one] who imprisoned and beat the believers [who assembled] in every synagogue, 20) and when your witness Stephen was killed, I stood there, approving [of it] and [even] guarding the clothing of those who stoned him to death.' 21) Then the Lord said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away from here to the Gentiles.'"

22) The people had listened to Paul speaking up to this point [i.e., until he said the word "Gentiles"], then they raised their voices and shouted, "Do away with such a person from the earth; it is not right for him to live."

23) And while the people shouted, waved around [torn] clothing and threw dust into the air, 24) the commander ordered Paul to be brought to headquarters and requested that he be interrogated by means of a flogging, in order to learn the reason why people were shouting against him. 25) Just as they were tying him up [in preparation] for the flogging, Paul said to the officer nearby, "Is it lawful for you to whip a Roman [citizen] before he has been [legally] condemned?"

26) When the officer heard this, he [immediately] went and told the commander, saying, "What are you going to do? For this man is a Roman citizen." 27) Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you [really] a Roman citizen?" Paul said, "Yes." 28) The commander answered, "It cost me a large sum of money to obtain

this [right of] citizenship." Paul replied, "But I am a Roman citizen by birth." 29) Then those who were about to interrogate Paul [with whips] immediately left him, and the commander also became fearful when he realized that he had chained a Roman citizen [illegally].

30) But the next day the commander released Paul [from the chains] because he wanted to know what specific charges the Jews has against him. So, he ordered the leading priests and the entire [Jewish] Council to assemble, then brought Paul down and placed him in front of them.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

1) Paul [then] looked intently at the Council [i.e., the Jewish supreme court called the "Sanhedrin"] and spoke [in his defense]: "Brothers, I have lived before God with a good conscience all my life." 2) [Upon hearing this], the head priest Ananias ordered that those standing closest to Paul hit him on the mouth. 3) Then Paul said to the head priest, "God will hit you, you white-washed wall [i.e., you hypocrite]. Are you sitting in judgment over me according to the law of Moses and [yet] do you order me to be hit contrary to that law?" 4) Those who stood nearby replied, "Are you insulting God's head priest?" 5) Paul said, "Brothers, I did not know that he was the head priest, for it is written [Ex. 22:28], 'You shall not speak evil about a leader of your people.'"

6) When Paul realized that part [of the Sanhedrin] were Sadducees and the other part were Pharisees, he lifted up his voice before the Council and said, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee. And it is concerning our hope that the dead will be raised that I have been brought to trial." 7) When he said this it stirred up a dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees and the assembly became divided. 8) For the Sadducees believe there is no resurrection, angels or spirits, but the Pharisees accept all of them [to be true].

9) A loud commotion developed [in the Council meeting]. Some of the teachers of the law of Moses who belonged to the Pharisee party stood up and argued, saying, "We can find nothing wrong with this man. What if an angel or spirit did speak to him?" 10) And when a serious debate broke out, the commander was afraid that Paul might [virtually] be torn apart by the mob, so he ordered his soldiers to go down [to the Council meeting] and forcibly remove

Paul and take him to the battalion headquarters.

11) The next night the Lord stood beside Paul [in a supernatural dream] and said, "Take courage, for just as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also be my witness in Rome."

12) When daylight came, [a group of] Jews conspired together, agreeing under oath that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. 13) There were more than forty men who made this pact. 14) They went to the leading priests and [Jewish] elders and told them, "We have bound ourselves under an oath [with serious consequences] to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. 15) Therefore, [all of] you, together with the Jewish Council, should notify the commander so that he will bring Paul [back] down to you, as though you wanted to consider his case further. Then we will be ready to kill him, [even] before he comes near [you]."

16) But Paul's nephew learned of their plot and went to the headquarters and told Paul [all about it]. 17) So, Paul called for one of the officers and said [to him], "Take this young man to the commander; he has something [important] to tell him." 18) So, the officer took Paul's nephew to the commander and said, "Paul, the prisoner, called for me and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to tell you." 19) The commander took him by the hand, and walking along together, asked him privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?" 20) And the lad said, "The Jews have plotted to ask you to take Paul down to the Council [meeting] tomorrow, as though you were going to question him further. 21) But, do not listen to them, because over forty men have laid a plot and bound themselves under an oath [with serious consequences] neither to eat nor drink [anything] until they have killed him. They are now ready [to carry out the plot] and are just waiting for you to agree [to their arrangement]." 22) So, the commander let the young man go, urging him, "Do not tell anyone that you have reported this to me." 23) Then he called two of his officers and said, "Get two hundred soldiers ready to go to Caesarea, along with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen, by nine o'clock tonight." [Note: This was calculated according to Jewish time]. 24) And he [also] requested that they furnish animals for Paul to ride so he could be brought safely to Felix, the governor.

25) The commander then wrote a letter like this: 26)

"Claudius Lysias, [commander of the battalion, is writing] to His Excellency, Governor Felix. Greetings: 27) This man [i.e., Paul] was grabbed by the Jews and almost killed by them when I discovered what they were doing and rescued him, after learning that he was a Roman citizen. 28) So, I brought him before the Council because I wanted to know the reasons for the charges [they were] bringing against him. 29) I found out that he was being accused over questions regarding their law, but that they had no charges against him deserving of the death penalty, or [even] of being kept in prison. 30) And when I was told that there was a plot against the man, I sent him to you immediately, also ordering his accusers to present their case against him in front of you."

31) So, the soldiers took charge of Paul and took him at night to Antipatris [Note: This was a town on the road between Jerusalem and Caesarea] as they were ordered. 32) The next day the soldiers allowed the horsemen to go on with Paul, while they [themselves] returned to headquarters. 33) When they came to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul before him. 34) And when the governor read the letter, he asked what province Paul was from. When he learned that he was from Cilicia, 35) he said, "I will hear your case fully when your accusers also get here." Then he ordered that Paul be kept [under guard] in Herod's palace.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

1) Five days later the head priest, Ananias, came down [to Caesarea] with certain [Jewish] elders and an attorney [named] Tertullus, who brought their case against Paul before the governor. 2) When Paul was called [to appear before the court] Tertullus began the prosecution by saying, "Your Excellency Felix: Since through you we are able to enjoy peace [in this province] and under your jurisdiction the problems in our society are being [properly] dealt with, 3) we welcome all such efforts in each district with full gratitude. 4) But, not wanting to prolong matters for you, I urge you to give consideration to this brief account [of the problem we face]. 5) We have found this man [i.e., Paul] to be extremely bothersome, and an instigator of strife among the Jews throughout the world and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6) We arrested him, for he

attempted to desecrate [even] the Temple. {{Some ancient manuscripts add verse 7) "and we would have judged him according to our law but commander Lysias came and forcibly took him out of our hands."}} 8) You will be able to determine the nature of our accusations against him by questioning him yourself." 9) Then the Jews also joined in [making] the charge, and confirmed all the facts that were being presented.

10) And when the governor had motioned for him to speak, Paul answered [the charges, by saying],

"I know [Your Excellency] that you have administered justice for this nation for many years, so I am glad to make my defense [before you]. 11) [I know] you can verify that it has not been over twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. 12) [While there] I was not observed arguing with anyone or trying to stir up a crowd [to riot] in the Temple or in the synagogues or [anywhere else] in the city. 13) Neither can anyone prove to you the charges they are now bringing against me. 14) But, I declare to you, I am serving the God of our forefathers according to the 'Way,' called [by my detractors] a sect, and I believe everything that is in harmony with the law of Moses and what is written in [the writings of] the prophets. 15) I have a hope in God that there will be a resurrection both for those who have done right and those who have done wrong, just as the Jews themselves also expect. 16) So, for this reason I make every effort to have a clear conscience before God and men at all times.

17) "Now after several years I came [to Jerusalem] to bring relief for the poor people of my nation and to present my offerings. 18) While doing this, they [i.e., the Jews] found out that I had undergone the rites of purification in the Temple. There was no crowd and no commotion. But certain Jews from [the province of] Asia 19) should have been here before you, [Your Excellency] to make their accusations, if they [really] had a valid charge against me. 20) Or let these men themselves [i.e., members of the Sanhedrin] testify what they found wrong with me when I stood before their Council [meeting]. 21) However, this one point, which I made when I stood among them [could have been objectionable]: I shouted, 'The reason I am being charged before you today is [my preaching of] the resurrection of the dead.'"

22) But because Felix [felt he] had more accurate knowledge of the "Way" [than was being presented by Paul's accusers], he

dismissed them, saying, "When commander Lysias comes down [to Caesarea] I will make a decision on your case." 23) So, he ordered his officer to keep Paul in custody, yet with some freedom, and not to prevent any of his friends from ministering to his needs.

24) After a number of days, Felix and Drusilla, his wife, who was a Jewess, came [back to the palace] and sent for Paul to [come and] tell them about [the] faith in Christ Jesus. 25) And as he discussed the matters of doing right, and [maintaining] self control and the coming judgment, Felix became terrified and answered, "Go on away for now; I will call you back when it is convenient for me." 26) He had hoped, along with everything else, that he would receive money from Paul, so he sent for him more frequently and had discussions with him. 27) So, Felix allowed Paul to remain in chains, because he wanted to gain favor with the Jews [during that period of time]. Two years passed and Felix was succeeded by Portius Festus.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

1) Three days after Festus came to the province he went from Caesarea up to Jerusalem. 2) The leading priests and the leading Jewish men [there] informed Festus of the charges against Paul. Then they begged him 3) to do them a favor by having Paul brought [from Caesarea] to Jerusalem, for they were plotting to kill him on the way. 4) Festus answered that [since] Paul was being held in custody in Caesarea, and [since] he himself was soon going there [i.e., he could see Paul at Caesarea at that time]. 5) So, he said, "Let your leaders go down with me and if there is anything [found] wrong with the man, let them bring their charges against him [at that time]."

6) After staying not more than eight or ten [more] days [there in Jerusalem], Festus went down to Caesarea and the following day he ordered Paul to appear before him as he sat in his court of justice. 7) When Paul appeared, the [Jewish] leaders who had accompanied Festus down from Jerusalem gathered around him and brought many serious charges against him, which they were not able to prove. 8) Paul replied in his defense, "I have not committed any sin against the law of the Jews, nor against the Temple, nor against Caesar."

9) But Festus, wanting to gain favor with the Jews [See 24:27], answered Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and

stand trial before me there?" 10) Paul replied, "I am [already] standing before a court of Caesar's authority, where I deserve to be tried. I have done nothing wrong to the Jews, as you very well know. 11) If then I am a criminal and have committed any crime that deserves the death penalty, I will not try to avoid being put to death. But if none of the charges I have been accused of are true, [then] no one has the right to turn me over [to the authorities]. I make my appeal to Caesar." 12) After conferring with his advisors, Festus answered Paul, "[Since] you have appealed to Caesar, then you will go to Caesar."

13) After a number of days King Agrippa [Note: This man was the great grandson of Herod the Great. See Matt. 2:1] and [his wife] Bernice arrived at Caesarea and came to greet Festus. 14) While they stayed there [with him] for many days, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king, saying, "There is this man [named Paul] who was left in custody by Felix. 15) When I was at Jerusalem, the leading priests and the Jewish elders presented his case before me to make a judgment against him. 16) I answered them that it is not the custom of the Romans to turn over any person [for sentencing] before he is faced by his accusers and has had the opportunity to defend himself against the charges made against him. 17) When therefore, his accusers had assembled here I did not delay [in dealing with the matter; in fact] the very next day I sat in court and summoned the man to be brought [before me]. 18) When his accusers stood up, they brought no charge of wrongdoing as I had expected [they would]. 19) All they had was a controversy with him over their own religion and about someone named Jesus, who had died [but] whom Paul alleges is [now] alive. 20) And I was perplexed as to how to proceed with the investigation, so I [finally] asked him if he would go to Jerusalem to have his case judged there. 21) But when Paul requested that his case be reviewed for a decision by Caesar, I ordered him to remain in custody until I could send him to Caesar."

22) Agrippa said to Festus, "I had been wanting to hear this man's testimony myself." [Festus replied], "Tomorrow you will [have the opportunity to] hear him."

23) So, the next day, when Agrippa and [his wife] Bernice, arrived in an elaborate procession, they entered the hearing chamber, along with the commanders and leading men of the city. 24) Then Festus spoke, "King Agrippa, and all you gentlemen assembled with

us, you see this man whose case a large number of Jews, [first] at Jerusalem and [then] here [in Caesarea] have petitioned me [to resolve]. They have been clamoring for him to be put to death, **25)** but I found that he had committed nothing which deserved the death [penalty]. And since he himself appealed [his case] to the Emperor, I decided to send him [to Rome]. **26)** But I do not have anything specific to write to His Majesty. This is the reason I have brought him before this assembly, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after you have questioned him, I would [then] have something [substantial] to write. **27)** For it does not seem reasonable for me to send a prisoner [to Rome] without indicating what the [formal] charges are against him."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

1) Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself."

So, Paul motioned [to the assembly] with his hand [for attention] and began speaking in his defense: **2)** "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that I am able to defend myself before you concerning all the charges being brought against me by the Jews, **3)** especially since you are an expert on all the customs and issues discussed among the Jews. So, for this reason I request that you hear [my response to them] patiently. **4)** All the Jews know how I lived during my youth and my early days among [the people of] my nation, and [especially here] in Jerusalem. **5)** They know of my early background; if they were willing to, they could testify that I lived as a [faithful] Pharisee, [which is] the strictest sect of our religion. **6)** And now I am standing [here], being judged because [I believe that] God will fulfill the hope He promised to our forefathers. **7)** This is the promise our twelve tribes [i.e., family groups], who earnestly serve God night and day, hope to see fulfilled. It is because [I advocate] this hope, O King, that I am being charged [with wrongdoing] by the Jews. **8)** So, why should you [Jews] consider it incredible for God to raise the dead? **9)** I truly thought within myself [that it was right] to do many things which were opposed to the name of Jesus from Nazareth. **10)** So, I was doing this in Jerusalem, having received [my] authority from the leading priests. I both imprisoned many of the saints [i.e., God's holy people] and [even] voiced my approval when

they were put to death [See 8:1]. 11) I often persecuted them in the synagogues, [even] trying to get them to blaspheme [i.e., speak against God]." I had extreme anger toward them and [even] traveled to foreign cities [in my effort] to persecute them.

12) "While on a journey to Damascus for this purpose, I was acting under the authority and directive of the leading priests. 13) [Then] along the road, about noon, O King, I saw a light from the sky, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those traveling with me. 14) When we all fell to the ground I heard a voice speaking in the Hebrew [i.e., Aramaic] language. [It said], 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? You are only hurting yourself by kicking against the spurs [i.e., opposing the work of God].' 15) I answered, 'Who are you, sir?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting. 16) But, get up onto your feet, for the reason I have appeared to you is to appoint you a minister and witness of both the things you have [already] seen of me and the things I will [reveal when] appearing to you. 17) I will rescue you from the [Jewish] people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them, 18) to open their eyes [to the truth] so they will turn from darkness to light and from the power [i.e., the influence] of Satan to God. [Then] they can receive the forgiveness of sins and the inheritance [of never ending life], along with [all] those who are set apart [for God] by trusting in Me.'

19) "As a result of this, O King, I did not disobey [the mandate of] this vision from heaven 20) but, [instead] declared to the people of Damascus first, [then] to the people of Jerusalem, and [finally to those] throughout all of the district of Judea, as well as to the Gentiles [everywhere] that they should repent [i.e., change their hearts and lives] and turn to God, doing deeds which demonstrate their repentance. 21) For this reason the Jews grabbed me in the Temple and attempted to kill me. 22) But I obtained help from God and so [I am able to] stand here to this day, testifying to both the common people and to those in prominence. [I am] saying only what the prophets and Moses said would happen, 23) namely, that the Christ must suffer and be the first to rise from the dead [i.e., never to die again] and then proclaim the light [of the Gospel] to the [Jewish] people and to the Gentiles."

24) As Paul made his defense in this way, Festus said to him loudly, "Paul, you are crazy. All your education is driving you insane." 25) But Paul replied, "I am not crazy, Your Excellency

Festus; I am [just] speaking a message of truth and sound reason. 26) I can speak boldly of these things because the King knows [they are true]. And I am convinced that none of these things are hidden from you, for none of them have been done in a corner [i.e., secretly]. 27) King Agrippa, do you believe [the message of] the prophets? [Yes] I know you do."

28) Agrippa said to Paul, "You expect to persuade me to be a Christian with such little effort [or, in such a short time]?" 29) Paul replied, "I wish to God that, whether it would take a little or a lot, not only you, but all those who hear me today, might become [Christians] like me, except [not] with these chains."

30) Then King Agrippa, [his wife] Bernice, Governor [Festus] and [the commanders and leading men of the city, 25:23] all rose up, 31) and when they left [the room] they conferred with one another, saying, "This man is not doing anything deserving of the death penalty or [even] imprisonment." 32) Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been released if he had not appealed [his case] to Caesar."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

1) And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they transferred Paul and certain other prisoners to the custody of a military officer named Julius, of the Augustan battalion. 2) We boarded a ship [originating] from Adramyttium which was ready to sail [from here in Caesarea], heading out to sea for parts of the coast of [the province of] Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, went with us.

3) The next day we stopped at Sidon [i.e., a seaport on the northwest coast of Palestine]. Julius treated Paul with kindness, [even] giving him the opportunity to meet his friends [there] and receive help [from them]. 4) We headed out to sea from there and sailed along the sheltered side of Cyprus because the wind was against us. 5) When we had sailed across the sea, off [the coast of] Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, [a town] of Lycia. 6) There Julius, the military officer, arranged [passage] for us on a ship, [originating] from Alexandria, [and] bound for Italy, and put us on board. 7) When we had sailed slowly for many days [and] had trouble

passing Cnidus because of an unfavorable wind, we sailed on the sheltered side of Crete and on past Salmone. 8) After making our way along the coast [of Crete] with difficulty, we arrived at a place called Fair Harbors [i.e., the principal seaport of the island], which was near the town of Lasea.

9) After much time had passed, the voyage became more dangerous because it was [now] past the Day of Atonement [Note: This would have been around September or October, when a sea voyage involved rough sailing]. So, Paul began warning the people [aboard ship], 10) saying, "Sirs, I can see that this voyage will result in suffering and much loss, not only to the ship and its cargo, but also to our [very] lives." 11) But the military officer paid more attention to the captain and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul was saying. 12) And, because the harbor was not suitable for staying in all winter, most of those on board were in favor of putting out to sea from there. They were hoping to reach Phoenix, [another] harbor on [the island of] Crete, which faced northwest and southwest, and [then] to spend the winter there.

13) When the south wind began to blow gently, they raised anchor, thinking this was the opportunity they had hoped for, [then] sailed close to the coastline of [southern] Crete. 14) But a short time later, a violent northeasterly wind they called "*Euraquilo*" swept down, 15) and when the ship was caught [by it], we were not able to face the wind, so had to give in and allow the ship to drift. 16) Then, sailing on the sheltered side of a small island named Cauda, we experienced difficulty in trying to secure the ship's life-boat. 17) And when they [finally] got the boat hoisted up, they slung [rope] cables underneath [and around] the hull [of the ship to reinforce it]. Then, fearing the ship would run aground on the [shifting], shallow sandbar, they lowered their [navigation] gear [Note: This may have been sails, rigging, etc.] and so were driven [as a derelict] by the wind. 18) As we were being severely battered by the storm, they began the next day to throw the cargo overboard [i.e., to lighten the ship]. 19) On the third day, they handed [the rest of] the ship's gear to each other, and threw it overboard [Note: This was perhaps furniture, rigging, sails, baggage, etc.]. 20) When they could see neither the sun nor the stars for many days [due to the storm], and with the wind blowing furiously on them, they gave up all hope of [ever] being saved.

21) When they had gone without food for a long time, Paul stood in the middle of the crew and spoke, "Men, you should have

listened to me and not sailed for Crete and thereby have to experience such suffering and loss. 22) But, now I want to encourage you to cheer up, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only the ship [will be lost]. 23) For an angel from God, to whom I belong and whom I serve, appeared to me last night, 24) saying, 'Do not be afraid Paul, for you must appear before Caesar, and look, God will grant you [the safety of] all these men aboard ship [along] with yourself.' 25) So men, cheer up, for I believe God, that everything will turn out just as I was told it would. 26) But we must be washed onto the shore of a certain island."

27) When the fourteenth night came, and while we were being tossed around [helplessly] in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the crew suspected they were nearing land. 28) So, they tested for depth and found [we were in] 120 feet [of water]. Then a little later they tested again and found it to be 90 feet. 29) So, fearing the possibility of being run aground on a rocky shore, they dropped four anchors from the stern and longed for daylight [to come]. 30) The crew had [by now] lowered the life-boat into the water, pretending to be dropping anchors from the bow, [but were in reality] attempting to abandon ship. 31) Paul said to the military officer [Julius] and to his soldiers, "Unless these men stay aboard the ship, none of you will be saved." 32) So, the soldiers cut the ropes securing the life-boat and let it drift away.

33) As it was dawning, Paul urged the crew to eat something, saying, "You have been waiting for fourteen days [for the weather to break] and you have continued to fast [all that time], eating nothing [at all]. 34) I urge you to eat some food; it will be for your own good, for not one hair from anyone's head will be lost." 35) And when he had said this he took bread, gave thanks to God for it in front of everyone, then broke it and began to eat. 36) Then they were all encouraged and they themselves took something to eat also. 37) (The total number of us aboard the ship was 276 persons). 38) And when they had eaten sufficiently, they began lightening the ship [so it would float higher] by throwing their wheat overboard.

39) When it got daylight they saw an island they did not recognize, but noticed [it had] a particular bay with a [suitable] beach. So, they discussed whether it would be possible to run the ship aground on the beach. 40) [Finally] they cut the ropes, dropping the anchors into the water and at the same time they released the oars

used for steering. Then they hoisted the bow-sail to the wind and headed [straight] for the beach. 41) Landing where two [strong] currents met, the ship ran aground, its bow lodging [in the sand] while its stern began to break up from the driving surf. 42) [Meanwhile] the soldiers had decided to kill the prisoners so that none of them would swim away and escape. 43) But the military officer, wanting to save Paul [from being killed], prevented them from doing this. [Instead] he ordered those who could swim to jump overboard and be the first to reach land. 44) The rest [he reasoned] could reach shore by floating on planks or other debris from the ship. And so it happened that all of them escaped safely to land.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

1) After we escaped [from the sinking ship] we became aware that the island [on which we had landed] was Melita [i.e., present-day Malta]. 2) The natives [there] showed us uncommon kindness. It had begun to rain and was [getting] cold, so they built a fire and made us feel welcome. 3) But as Paul gathered a bundle of sticks, and was placing them on the fire, a snake crawled out because of the heat and clung to his hand. 4) And when the natives saw the poisonous creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "This man must be a murderer because, even though he escaped from the sea, [divine] justice is not going to allow him to live." 5) However, Paul shook off the creature into the fire without suffering any harm. 6) But the natives expected him to swell up [from snake bite] or fall dead suddenly, but after expecting this for a long time and not seeing any harm come to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

7) Now in that general vicinity there was property belonging to the chief of the island, a man named Publius, who welcomed us courteously and entertained us for three days. 8) And it happened that Publius' father lay sick with a fever and dysentery. Paul went [to his house] and, after praying and placing hands on him, healed him. 9) When he had done this, the rest of those on the island who had diseases, [also] came and were healed. 10) These people also showered many honors on us and when we sailed [away], they brought the provisions we needed and put them aboard [the ship].

11) After three months we set sail on a ship that had spent the

winter on the island [of Melita]. This ship had originated from Alexandria and was designated as "Twin Brothers" [Note: The ship may have been named this because of its prow containing the figures of the mythical twin gods of sailors, Castor and Pollux]. 12) And docking at Syracuse [i.e., a town on the eastern shore of Sicily], we stayed there three days. 13) From there we sailed around [and then north] until we arrived at Rhegium [i.e., a town on the "toe" of Italy]. The next day a south wind began blowing, and on the second day we arrived at Puteoli [i.e., a town about half-way to Rome], 14) where we found [some Christian] brothers. They urged us to stay with them for seven days. So, [that is how] we finally got to Rome. 15) [So], hearing that we were coming, the brothers [from Rome] traveled from there as far [south] as "The Market of Appius" and "The Three Inns" to meet us. When Paul saw them he thanked God and was [very] encouraged.

16) When we entered Rome [itself] Paul was permitted to live alone except for a soldier who guarded him.

17) And it happened after three days that Paul called together those who were the leading Jews, and when they assembled he said to them, "Brothers, although I had done nothing against the [Jewish] people or the customs of our forefathers, yet I was made a prisoner at Jerusalem, being placed in the custody of the Romans [while there]. 18) After questioning me, they wanted to release me because they could not find any grounds for sentencing me to death. 19) But when the Jews objected to this, I was compelled to appeal [my case] to Caesar, even though I had done nothing against my country. 20) It was for this reason that I requested to see you and talk with you, for I am wearing this chain because of the hope held by the Israelites." 21) Then they said to him, "We did not receive any letters from Judea about you, nor did any of the brothers come here to report anything bad about you. 22) But we would like to hear what you think, for according to our knowledge, this sect [you belong to] is being spoken against everywhere."

23) And when they had arranged a day, large numbers of people came to Paul's house. He explained [everything to them], testifying from morning until evening concerning the kingdom of God and concerning [the Messiahship of] Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from [the writings of] the prophets. 24) And some people believed what Paul said and some refused to believe. 25) And when they could not agree among themselves they left, after hearing Paul

make this one [important] statement: "The Holy Spirit has spoken truthfully to your forefathers through Isaiah the prophet, 26) saying, [Isa. 6:9-10], 'Go to these people and say, you will hear all right, but you will not understand [what you hear]. You will see all right, but you will not perceive [what you see]. 27) For these people's minds are dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes. For, if this were not the case, they would perceive what they see with their eyes, and understand what they hear with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and would turn [back to God] again and I [God] would heal them [from their sins.]' 28) Then let it be known to you that salvation from God is [now] being announced to the Gentiles. They will listen [to it]." {{Some ancient manuscripts insert verse 29) "And when he had said these words, the Jews left, disputing about the matter among themselves."}}

30) Then Paul lived for two whole years in his own rented house and welcomed everyone who visited him. 31) He preached to them about the kingdom of God and taught things about the Lord Jesus Christ, with no one preventing him.

ROMANS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ, [who was] called to be an apostle, [and] set apart for [preaching] the Gospel of God. 2) God had promised this good news a long time ago through His prophets [and had it written] in the holy Scriptures [i.e., the Old Testament]. 3) It was about His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born as a physical descendant of King David. 4) He was appointed to be the Son of God with power through the Spirit of holiness [Note: This could refer to the Holy Spirit] when He was raised from the dead. 5) It was through Jesus, and for His name's sake, that we [i.e., I] received God's favor to become an apostle, in order to bring about obedience based on faith from among people of all nations.

6)-7) All of you there in Rome [i.e., the church there] are also among such obedient believers. You are called Jesus Christ's [people], loved by God and called to be His holy people. May you have unearned favor and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

8) First of all, I want to thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being told about throughout the whole world. 9) For God, whom I serve wholeheartedly in [preaching] the Gospel of His Son, is my witness [to the truth] of how continually I mention you in my prayers. 10) I am always requesting that somehow, by God's will, I may now eventually be able to visit you. 11) For I long to see you so that I can provide you with some spiritual gift [See I Cor. 12:1-11], for the purpose of strengthening you [in the faith]. 12) What I mean is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. 13) And I want you to be aware, brothers, of how frequently I [had] planned to visit you (but was prevented from doing so until now). I wanted to come in order to bear some fruit [i.e., make additional converts] among you, just as I have done among the other Gentiles [i.e., unconverted people].

14) I have a debt to pay [i.e., an obligation to preach] to Greeks and heathens; to the educated and to the ignorant. 15) So, to the best of my ability, I am eager to preach the Gospel to all of you

in Rome also.

16) I am not ashamed of the good news [i.e., the Gospel], because it is God's power for [bringing] salvation to every person who believes [in Jesus]; first to Jews and then to Greeks [i.e., unconverted Gentiles]. **17)** For the Gospel reveals how a person can be made right with God. It is through faith [in Jesus], from beginning to end, just as it is written [Hab. 2:4], "The righteous person will [obtain] life by [his] faith [in God]."

18) For God's extreme anger is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people who restrain the truth [from being known and obeyed] by their wickedness. **19)** For what is known about God is plain to these people [i.e., to the Gentiles], because God has made it clear to them. **20)** For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities of eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, [capable of] being perceived through the things that He has made. So, these people have no excuse [i.e., for not believing in Him]. **21)** Now they knew who God was, but they did not honor Him as God or thank Him [for their blessings]. Instead they engaged in their useless speculations and their foolish minds were filled with [spiritual] darkness. **22)** They claimed to be wise, but became fools, **23)** and exchanged the honor belonging to the immortal God for the statues of mortal men, and birds, and animals and reptiles.

24) So, God allowed [or, abandoned] them to have the impure desires of their hearts, and to [practice] degrading behavior with their bodies among themselves. **25)** For they exchanged God's truth for the [devil's] lie, and worshiped and served what was created instead of the Creator, who is to be praised forever. May it be so.

26) For this reason God allowed [or, abandoned] them to [practice] degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function [i.e., of sex] for what is against nature [i.e., lesbianism]. **27)** And men did the same thing, leaving the natural function [i.e., of sex] with women, and burning in their desire for each other. Men committed indecent [sexual] acts with other men [i.e., homosexuality], and [so] brought on themselves the penalty they deserved for this perversion.

28) And since these people refused to acknowledge God, He has allowed [or, abandoned] them to have degraded minds and to practice those things which they should not do. **29)** They are full of

all kinds of wickedness, evil, greed, and maliciousness. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, **30)** slanderers, hateful toward God, arrogant, proud and boastful. They think up evil things to do; they disobey their parents; **31)** they do not have any sense; they do not keep their promises; they fail to show natural affection; and they are merciless. **32)** These people know that God's decrees require that those who practice such things deserve to die [i.e., either spiritual or temporal punishment], yet they not only do the same things [themselves], but even approve of other people who practice them.

CHAPTER TWO

1) So, whoever you are, you people do not have any excuse for judging people [Note: At this point Paul begins addressing the Jews. See verse 17]. For in a matter where you judge someone else [to be wrong] you [actually] condemn yourselves, because you are practicing the same things [you condemn them for doing]. **2)** Now we [Jews] know that God's judgment against people who practice such things [i.e., the Gentiles] is according to truth. [Note: Some use "You say," at the beginning of the sentence, making it an assertion of the Jews which Paul sets about to answer]. **3)** But consider this, you people who judge others for practicing the same things you [yourselves] practice; do you think you will escape God's judgment [for this]? **4)** Or, do you despise the abundance of God's kindness and tolerance and patience [toward you], not realizing that His kindness is intended to cause you to repent? **[i.e., to change your hearts and lives]**. **5)** But your stubbornness and refusal to repent are storing up wrath [i.e., punishment] for yourselves, [to be experienced] on the Day of Wrath [i.e., the day of judgment] when God's just judgment will be revealed. **6)** He will repay every person for what he has done. [See Psa. 62:12]. **7)** To the ones who continue doing what is good and who look for glory, honor and immortal life [God will give] never ending life. **8)** But to the ones who have selfish ambition [Note: Some translate these words "are contentious"] and refuse to obey the truth, but [instead] obey what is wrong, [God will bring] wrath, fury, **9)** anguish and distress. He will bring these upon every human being who does wrong, upon the Jews first, then also upon the Greeks [i.e., Gentiles]. **10)** But [He will bring] glory, honor and peace upon every

person who does what is good; upon the Jews first, then also upon the Greeks, 11) for there is no favoritism with God. 12) For all those people [i.e., Gentiles] who have sinned without [knowing] the law of Moses will also be lost without [knowing] that law. And all those people [i.e., Jews] who have sinned under [the authority] of the law of Moses will be judged by [the requirements of] that law. 13) For [it is] not those who hear the law of Moses who are right with God, but [it is] those who obey [the requirements of] that law [perfectly] who will be considered right with God. 14) (For when the [unconverted] Gentiles, who do not have the law of Moses, instinctively practice [some of] its requirements, they become their own lawmakers, even though they do not have the law of Moses. 15) In doing this [i.e., practicing some of the requirements of the law of Moses], they demonstrate that these requirements are written in their hearts. Their conscience tells them this, and their thoughts alternately accuse them [of wrongdoing], or else endorse them [for doing right]). 16) This will be done on the day when God judges the secrets of men's [hearts] through Christ Jesus, according to [the teaching of] my Gospel.

17) But if you call yourselves "Jews," and [claim to] rely on the law of Moses, and brag about [belonging to] God; 18) if you know His will and have been taught by the law of Moses to [evaluate and] give approval to what is best; 19) if you are confident that you can give [spiritual] guidance to blind people and enlightenment to those who are in [spiritual] darkness; 20) if you are instructors of the ignorant, and teachers of babies [i.e., immature people] and possess in the law of Moses the [correct] form of knowledge and truth --- 21) since you teach other people [all of this], why do you not teach yourselves [these things]? You preach that a person should not steal; [but] do you steal? 22) You say that a person should not commit adultery [i.e., sexual unfaithfulness to their mate]; [but] do you commit adultery? You [claim to] hate idols; [but] do you rob [their] temples? [Note: It is difficult to determine how the Jews were doing this. Perhaps they were guilty of the "spirit" of idolatry by devoting their efforts and affections to material things instead of to God]. 23) You boast about having the law of Moses; [but] do you dishonor God by breaking that law? 24) For God's name is being spoken against among the Gentiles because of your behavior, just as it is written. [See Isa. 52:5].

25) Now the practice of circumcision [i.e., the Jewish rite of identity, signifying the responsibility to observe the law of Moses] is

worthwhile, providing you obey [the rest of] the law of Moses. But if you disobey the law, you might as well have never been circumcised. 26) So, if an uncircumcised person [i.e., a Gentile] obeys [the rest of] the requirements of the law, will not the fact that he is not circumcised be considered [by God] as though he were? 27) So, will not those physically uncircumcised people [i.e., the Gentiles], who obey the law, condemn you [Jews] for breaking the law, even though you have the written code and [practice] circumcision?

28) For that person is not a Jew who is one [merely] on the outside. And circumcision is not [merely] an outward physical ordinance. 29) But the [true] Jew is the person who is one on the inside, and [his] circumcision is a heart condition, [produced] by the Holy Spirit and not by the written law of Moses. [Note: Some translate "Spirit" here as "spirit" and make it simply an amplification of "heart"]. This person receives his praise from God and not [merely] from people.

CHAPTER THREE

1) What advantage then does the Jew have [i.e., over the Gentile]? Or what value is there in circumcision? 2) Much in every way! First of all, the Jews were entrusted with the messages of God [i.e., their prophets received divine revelations]. 3) But what if some [of the Jews] were unfaithful? Does their lack of faith nullify the faithfulness of God? Certainly not! 4) But let God be truthful, [even if] everyone [else] is a liar. For it is written [Psa. 51:4], "[God], you should be proven right when you speak, and win [your case] when put on trial."

5) Now if our wrongdoing serves to emphasize more clearly that God does what is right, what should we say about that? Is God being unjust for sending [His] wrath [on the world]? (I am raising a human objection). 6) Certainly not, for then how could He judge the world? 7) But if my "lie" [i.e., as you Jews call it] would result in God's truthfulness [about you Jews] increasing the honor He receives, why am I also still judged to be a sinner [by you]? 8) And why should we not say, "Let us do what is wrong so something good will come from it," as some people slanderously claim that we are saying? These people deserve to be condemned.

9) What then? Are we [Jews] any better off [than those Gentiles]? No, not at all, for we have already charged that both Jews

and Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] alike are under [the power of] sin, **10)** as it is written [Psa. 14:1ff; 53:1ff], "No one [always] does what is right; not even one person. **11)** No one understands [everything]. No one looks to God [all the time]. **12)** Everyone has turned away [from God]. All of them have become worthless. No one is [always] kind; no, not even one person." **13)** [Psa. 5:9 says], "Their throats are like open graves [i.e., they are foul-mouthed]. They have spoken deceitfully." [Psa. 90:3 says], "There is snake venom under their lips [i.e., their words are deadly]." **14)** [Psa. 10:7 says], "Their speech is full of cursing and bitterness." **15)** [Isa. 59:7ff says], "Their feet [take them where they] are quick to commit murder. **16)** Their pathways are strewn with ruin and misery [i.e., caused by them]. **17)** They have not known [how to walk on] a peaceful pathway." **18)** [Psa. 36:1 says], "They do not view God with reverence."

19) Now we [all] know that everything the law says applies to those who are under [obligation to obey] that law, [Note: Here "the law" appears to refer to the Old Testament Scriptures generally, since Psalms and Isaiah are quoted. See verses 10-18]. This is so that the mouth of every objector may be stopped [i.e., from making excuses for his sin], and thereby bring the entire world under God's judgment [i.e., both Jews and Gentiles]. **20)** This is because no human being can be considered right with God by [obeying] the requirements of a law. [Note: It is difficult to determine the exact sense in which "law" is used in these verses. It may be law *generally*, or the law of Moses *specifically*. See Bruce, pages 52-58]. For the knowledge of what sin is comes from the law of Moses.

21) But now [i.e., under the Gospel age], a way of being considered right with God apart from [any] law has been made known. [The writings of] the law [i.e., the Pentateuch] and the prophets bear witness to this. **22)** Being considered right with God is [obtained] through faith in Jesus Christ by every person who believes [in Him], for there is no favoritism [with God], **23)** for everyone has sinned and falls short of God's glory [i.e., His approval, or His perfect character]. **24)** But people are made right with Him as a free gift by His unearned favor, through being bought back [from Satan] by Christ Jesus. **25)** God presented Jesus as the atoning sacrifice [for our sins] through [our] faith in His blood [i.e., His death on the cross]. This was in order to demonstrate His justice when, by using forbearance, He passed over people's sins in previous generations. **26)** [In doing this] God [also] demonstrated His justice [to people] of this

present time, that He Himself is just and the One who makes the people right with Him who have faith in Jesus.

27) Where then is the [basis for] boasting [i.e., over being right with God]? There is not any. Is it by [obedience to] a law? Is it by doing certain deeds? Not at all, but by a law of faith. 28) For we conclude that a person is made right with God by faith [in Christ], apart from [obedience to] the requirements of a law [or, the law of Moses, See verse 20]. 29) Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not the God of the Gentiles also? Yes, [indeed], of the Gentiles also, 30) since there is [only] one God, who makes the circumcised ones [i.e., the Jews] right with Him by faith [in Christ] and the uncircumcised ones [i.e., the Gentiles] through faith [in Christ].

31) Do we then [intend to] destroy law [observance] because faith [in Christ is now required]? Certainly not! But [instead], we uphold [the validity of] law.

CHAPTER FOUR

1) What should we say then [about what] our forefather Abraham discovered? 2) For if Abraham had been made right with God by doing good deeds he would have had something to boast about, but not in God's presence. 3) For what does the Scripture say? [Gen. 15:6 says], "And Abraham believed God, so God considered him righteous." 4) Now wages are not considered a gift if the person has to work for them, but [rather] an obligation [of his employer]. 5) But to the person who believes in God, who makes ungodly people right with Himself apart from doing good deeds, that person's faith is considered by God [as the basis] for being righteous. 6) Even King David also spoke of the blessing experienced by the person who was considered righteous by God apart from doing good deeds. 7) He said [Psa. 32:1ff], "Those people whose ungodly deeds are forgiven [by God] and whose sins are covered over, are [truly] blessed. 8) That person whose sin will not be held against him by the Lord is [truly] blessed." 9) Is this blessing experienced by the circumcised ones [i.e., the Jews only] or by the uncircumcised ones [i.e., the Gentiles] also? We are saying, "Abraham's faith was credited to him for righteousness." 10) [But] when was he given credit [i.e., for being righteous]? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was before

he was circumcised, not afterward. 11) He received the sign of circumcision as a seal [confirming] that he had been [considered] righteous because of the faith he had before being circumcised. Thus, he became the [spiritual] father of all people who believe [in God], even though they have not been circumcised, so that they could be considered righteous [by their faith]. 12) And he also became the father of circumcised people [i.e., the Jews], who are not only circumcised, but who also follow the [same] example of faith [in God] which our forefather Abraham had before he was circumcised. 13) For it was not through [obedience to] law [See 3:31] that the promise to Abraham or his descendants of inheriting [the best of] the world [was made], but through their being considered righteous because of faith [in God]. 14) For if [only] those who are obedient to the law deserve an inheritance, [then their] faith [in God] is for nothing, and God's promise is nullified. 15) For the law brings [God's] wrath [i.e., because of man's failure to obey it perfectly], but where there is no law, there is no [responsibility for] sin.

16) For this reason, the promise [i.e., of being made right with God] comes through faith [in God], according to His unearned favor, so that it may be [given] with certainty to all of Abraham's descendants. The promise is given not only to those [who live] under the law [i.e., the Jews], but also to [all] those [who live] by faith, like Abraham. Abraham is the [spiritual] father of all of us [believers], 17) just as it is written [Gen. 17:5], "I [i.e., God] have made you [i.e., Abraham] forefather of many nations." He received this promise in the presence of God, in whom he believed, and who gives life [back] to dead people and who refers to things [promised] as though they were [already] fulfilled. 18) Abraham hoped for what he believed [God had promised], even when there seemed little hope [of it happening], so this made him forefather of many nations, according to the words spoken to him [Gen. 15:5], "Your descendants will be many." 19) Abraham's faith did not become weak [even though] he was about one hundred years old and considered his body almost dead, and Sarah's womb incapable of conceiving a child. 20) Yet he looked for the promise of God [to be fulfilled] and did not waver, doubting [that it would happen], but his faith strengthened him. He honored God 21) and was fully convinced that what He had promised, He was able to carry out. 22) So therefore, God considered him righteous [i.e., because of such faith]. 23) Now the words

"considered righteous [by God]" were not written for his sake only, **24)** but they were written for our sake also, who will be considered righteous by God for believing in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **25)** [This] Jesus was delivered up [to die] for our sins and was raised [from the dead] to make us right with God.

CHAPTER FIVE

1) So, since we are made right with God by [our] faith, we have peace with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2)** Through Jesus we have also gained access by [our] faith to this unearned favor [of God]. We stand firm in it, and are glad that we have the hope of being honored by God. **3)** And not only this, but we also rejoice in our troubles, knowing that [experiencing] troubles produces endurance; **4)** and endurance [produces God's] approval; and [His] approval [produces] hope. **5)** And [having such] hope keeps us from being disappointed, because God's love [for us] has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who was given to us [by God].

6) For while we were still helpless, at [just] the proper time, Christ died for ungodly people. **7)** Someone would not likely die to rescue a righteous person, though possibly someone would dare to die in order to rescue a good person. **8)** But God demonstrates His own love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

9) Since we are now made right with God by the blood of Christ [i.e., by His dying on the cross], how much more certain it is that we will be saved from God's wrath [in the future] by Him! **10)** For if while we were [God's] enemies, we were restored to fellowship with Him through the death of His Son, now that we have been restored, how much more [certainly] will we be saved [from condemnation] by His life! **11)** And not only is this true, but we also rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have been restored to fellowship with God.

12) Therefore, just as sin came into the world through [the action of] one man [i.e., Adam] and [physical] death through that sin, so [physical] death has spread to all people, because all people have sinned. [Note: This difficult passage (verses 12-21) seems to be saying that the entire human race must experience physical death because of Adam's sin (I Cor. 5:22), which is somehow considered to be everyone's sin. See Murray, pp. 180-187, for a thorough discussion]. **13)** For even before the law of Moses, sin was [being committed] in the

world. But man is not responsible for [his] sin when there is no law.

14) Yet [physical] death ruled [over mankind] from the time of Adam to Moses, even over those people who had not sinned the way Adam did. [Now] Adam prefigured the coming of Jesus.

15) But the free gift [of salvation through Christ] is not [exactly] like the sin [of Adam]. For if many people died [physically] because of the sin of the one man [i.e., Adam], how much more did God's favor abound by [providing] His gracious gift [of salvation] to many people because of the one man, Jesus Christ. **16)** And the gift [of salvation] is not like [the effect of] one man's sin [i.e., Adam's], for [God's] judgment of condemnation came [upon mankind] through one man [i.e., Adam], but the free gift [of salvation] came as the result of [the] many sins [of mankind] and [it] made people right with God. **17)** For if [physical] death ruled [over mankind] because of the sin of the one man [i.e., Adam], how much more will those who receive the abundance of God's unearned favor, and the gift of being right with Him, rule in [never ending] life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

18) So then, just as [God's] judgment came, condemning all people [to physical death] because of one sin [i.e., Adam's]; even so the free gift of being made right with God and [resulting in] life may be received by all people because of one man's [i.e., Christ's] act of righteousness. [Note: This "life" may refer to spiritual life now, or to being made alive in the resurrection, which would reverse the curse of physical death caused by Adam's sin].

19) For just as many people [i.e., all mankind] were considered [by God] to be sinners [and thus to suffer physical death] through the disobedience of the one man [i.e., Adam]; even so many people [i.e., all believing mankind] will be considered right with God [and thus live again] through the obedience of the one man [i.e., Christ]. **20)** Now the law of Moses was introduced [into the world] in order to cause sin to increase [i.e., it defined many things to be wrong that were previously not regarded as sin]. But with the increase of sin, God's unearned favor increased all the more. **21)** This was so that just as sin ruled [over mankind], causing [physical] death, even so God's unearned favor would rule [over mankind], providing [them with] righteousness, and leading to never ending life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHAPTER SIX

1) What shall we say, then? Should we continue sinning so that more of God's unearned favor will [have to] be shown? 2) Certainly not! How can we, who died to sin [i.e., stopped living under its power], go on living in it [i.e., practicing it] any longer? 3) Or, do you not know that all of us who were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into His death? 4) Therefore, we were buried with Him through [our] immersion [in water] into [a relationship with] His death, so that, just like Christ was raised up from the dead through the glorious power of the Father, so we also can [be raised up from the water to] live a new life. 5) For, if we have become united with Christ in an act similar to His death [i.e., by being buried in water], we will also be [united with Him] in an act similar to His resurrection from the dead [i.e., our rising from the water to live a new life]. 6) We know that our old self was [figuratively] crucified with Christ, in order that the body of sin [i.e., our whole life of sin] might be destroyed [i.e., become powerless to control our actions and thoughts], so that we should not be enslaved to the practice of sin any longer. 7) For a dead person is freed from [the control of] sin.

8) Now if we have died with Christ [i.e., to the practice of sin], we believe we will also live with Him. [Note: This "living" probably refers to our spiritual relationship with Him during our Christian life]. 9) We know that Christ was raised from the dead, never to die again, because death does not have control over Him any longer. 10) For [in] the death He experienced, He died to sin [i.e., to remove sin] once for all. But the life that He [now] lives, He lives [fully] for God. 11) So, you [too] should consider yourselves dead to sin [i.e., no longer under its power], but [spiritually] alive to God, in [fellowship with] Christ.

12) So, do not allow [the practice of] sin to rule your mortal bodies, so that you obey its desires. 13) And do not offer the parts of your bodies [i.e., hands, eyes, etc. See Matt. 5:29-30] as tools for [accomplishing] evil purposes; but [instead] offer yourselves to God, as [people who are] alive from the dead [i.e., no longer under the power of sin] and the parts of your bodies as tools for [accomplishing] righteous purposes for God. 14) For sin must not be your master [i.e., it must not have power over you], for you are not governed by law, but by God's unearned favor.

15) [So], what then? Should we sin because we are not governed by law but by God's unearned favor? Certainly not! **16)** Do you not know that you are the slaves of whoever you offer your obedience to? If you obey [the desire to] sin, it leads to [spiritual] death; or if you obey [God] it leads to righteousness. **17)** Thank God that you people, who were once slaves to [the practice of] sin, became obedient from [your] heart to the pattern of teaching [i.e., the Gospel message] you committed yourself to. **18)** And when you were freed from [the practice of] sin, you became slaves to doing what is right. **19)** I am using human reasoning because of your human weakness. For just as you once offered the parts of your bodies as slaves to impurity and to wickedness, which led to further wickedness; so now [you should] offer the parts of your body as slaves to do what is right, which leads to holy living. **20)** For when you were [once] slaves to [the practice of] sin, you were free from [being controlled by] righteousness. **21)** What benefit did you receive at that time from doing the things you are now ashamed of? For the end of such behavior is [spiritual] death. **22)** But now, since you have been freed from [the practice of] sin and have become slaves to God, the benefits you receive are a holy life [here] and never ending life in the future. **23)** For the wages for sinning is [spiritual] death, but God's free gift is never ending life in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus our Lord.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1) Or, do you not know, brothers, (I am talking to people who know how law works) that the law has authority over a person only as long as he lives ? [Note: It is not clear whether this refers to Roman law or the law of Moses]. **2)** For a married woman is legally bound to her husband for as long as he lives. But, when he dies, she is released from the marriage contract. **3)** So, if she lives with another man while her husband is still alive, she will be called an adulteress [i.e., a person who is sexually unfaithful to their mate]. But if her husband dies, she is legally free to marry another man without committing adultery.

4) Therefore, my brothers, you also died to the law [i.e., were released from its binding requirements] through the body of Christ [Note: This seems to refer to Christ's death on the cross, but some think it refers to becoming a part of the church], so that you could belong to someone else, [namely] to Christ, who was raised from the dead in order that we might live

spiritually productive lives for God. 5) For when we were in the flesh [i.e., before conversion], our sinful desires, aroused by [the restrictions of] the law of Moses, worked in our bodies to produce activity that led to [spiritual] death. 6) But now that we have died to what controlled us and have been released from [the requirements of] the law of Moses [i.e., under the Gospel age], we serve [God] in a new way [directed] by the Holy Spirit [Note: Some take "Spirit" here to be "spirit" and see it as describing the inner person], and not in the old way [directed] by the written law of Moses.

7) What shall we say then? Is the law of Moses sinful? Certainly not! For I would not have known what sin was if it had not been for the law. For [example]; I would not have known [what it meant] to covet [i.e., have a strong desire for what belongs to someone else] except that the law said [Ex. 20:17], "You must not covet." 8) So, through that commandment, sin found an opportunity to produce in my heart all kinds of improper desires for what belonged to others. For until there was the law, sin was dead [i.e., it did not stimulate excitement and activity as much]. 9) And I was [once] alive before being aware of the law [i.e., complacent and without a sense of guilt]; but when [awareness of] the commandment [not to sin] came, sin sprang to life, 10) and I died [i.e., came under its power]. And [so] the commandment, which was [intended] to bring [spiritual] life, actually brought [spiritual] death. 11) For by means of God's commandment [against sinning], sin found an opportunity to deceive me and [even] kill me [spiritually]. 12) So, the law of Moses itself is holy and the commandment [against sinning] is holy and just and good. 13) Was this [commandment] then, which was intended for my good, [actually] responsible for my [spiritual] death? Certainly not! But so that sin could be seen as [truly] sinful, it produced [spiritual] death in me through something that was good [i.e., the commandment against sinning]. This was so that, by means of the commandment [against sinning], sin could be seen as extremely sinful.

14) For we know that the law of Moses is spiritual [i.e., from the Holy Spirit in origin and character], but I am fleshly, sold as a slave to sin. [Note: "Flesh" throughout this section refers to a person's natural inclinations to sin]. 15) For I do not [really] understand what I am doing; I practice what I do not want to and I hate what I do. [Note: This highly controversial section (verses 14b-25) is here viewed as the struggles of the apostle Paul *after* his conversion,

and by extension, of all Christians. See Bruce, pages 150ff; Murray, pages 255ff; Lard, pages 236ff]. **16)** But if I do what I do not want to, I agree with the law [which condemns such conduct] that it is good. **17)** So, now I am not [really] the one doing this, but [it is] sin which is living in me. **18)** For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh, for the desire to do good is present in my heart, but the ability to carry it out [consistently] is not. **19)** For I do not do the good [things] I want to, but I practice the evil [things] I do not want to. **20)** But if I do what I do not want to, [then] I am no longer the one doing it, but [instead], it is sin which lives in me [i.e., that motivates such conduct].

21) So, I find this principle [at work]: [Although] I want to do what is good, evil is [always] present [and often wins out]. **22)** For in my heart I am delighted with God's law, **23)** but I see a different law [at work] in my body, waging [spiritual] warfare against the law in my mind. It brings me into captivity to the law of sin in my body. **24)** What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body doomed to [spiritual] death? **25)** Thank God [that I can be rescued] through [the power of] Jesus Christ our Lord.

So then, I personally [try to] serve God's law with my mind, but [all too often] I serve the law of sin with my flesh [i.e., submitting in weakness to my human desires].

CHAPTER EIGHT

1) Therefore, none of those who are in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus will be condemned. **2)** For the Holy Spirit's law which provides [never ending] life for those in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus has freed me from the law that requires [spiritual] death for sinning. **3)** For what the law was not able to do [for mankind], since it was [too] weak [to deliver them from condemnation] because fleshly people [were unable to obey it perfectly], God condemned sin in the flesh [i.e., sin was declared evil and its power over man broken]. God did this by sending His own Son in a body like sinful man's, and to destroy sin, **4)** so that the requirements of the law could be [considered] fulfilled in us, who do not live according to [the dictates of] the flesh, but according to [the promptings of] the Holy Spirit. **5)** For those people who are [controlled] by the flesh think about [i.e., desire] what the flesh wants; but those who are [controlled] by the Holy Spirit [desire] what the Holy Spirit wants. **6)**

For the one whose mind is [controlled] by the flesh will suffer [spiritual] death; but the one whose mind is [controlled] by the Holy Spirit will enjoy [never ending] life and peace. 7) This is because the one whose mind is [controlled] by the flesh is an enemy of God; for he is not obedient to God's law, and in fact, cannot obey it. 8) And those people who are living according to the flesh cannot please God. 9) But if the Spirit of God [truly] lives in your heart, you are not [being controlled] by the flesh, but by the Holy Spirit. But if any person does not have the Spirit of Christ [living in him], he does not belong to Christ. 10) And if Christ lives in your hearts, even though the body is [doomed to] death because of [Adam's?] sin; yet the spirit is [destined to] live [forever] because of being [made] right with God. [Note: Some take "spirit" here to be "Spirit" and make it "The Holy Spirit gives you life." See next verse]. 11) But if the Spirit of God, who raised up Jesus from the dead, lives in your hearts, [then] that One [i.e., God] who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead, will restore life to your mortal bodies also, through [the power of] God's Spirit who lives in your hearts.

12) So then, brothers, we are under obligation, but not to live under [the control of] the flesh, 13) for if you people live under [the control of] the flesh, you must die [spiritually]; but if you put to death [i.e., stop practicing] the [sinful] habits of the body by [the power of] the Holy Spirit, you will live [spiritually]. 14) For all of those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15) For you did not receive the Holy Spirit, to enslave you again to fear, [Note: Some translators take "Holy Spirit" here to be "spirit," making the verse say "you did not receive the spirit of slavery"], but you received the Holy Spirit [who produces] sonship, so we can call out, "*Abba*", [which means] "Father." 16) The Holy Spirit Himself bears testimony [along] with our [human] spirit that we are the children of God. 17) And if we are [His] children, then we have an inheritance from God [i.e., blessings here and hereafter] and are fellow-sharers with Christ [of such blessings], providing we [are willing to] suffer with Him, so we can also be honored with Him [i.e., in the future life. See verses 18-25].

18) For I consider that our present sufferings do not deserve to be compared with the glory that will be revealed to us [i.e., in the future life]. 19) For [all] creation [Note: "Creation" here refers to the material heavens and earth, and is personified through verse 23] is eagerly waiting for the children of God to be revealed [i.e., in their glorious state]. 20) But God subjected the created world to aimless frustration [i.e., after the

fall. See Gen. 3:17-18] --- it did not happen by its own choice. Yet there was hope **21)** that the created world itself would be freed from its slavery to corrupting influences [i.e., produced by the fall] and receive the glorious freedom which belongs to God's children. **22)** For we know that the entire created world moans in painful anguish [i.e., as a woman in childbirth] until this present moment. **23)** And not just the world, but even we [Christians] ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit [i.e., the first installment of our inheritance from God] also groan within us, eagerly waiting to be adopted as [God's] children, and receive back our bodies [i.e., in the resurrection]. **24)** For in [this] hope we were saved [i.e., we received the hope of future blessings]; but if we [already] see what we hope for, it is not [really] hope. For who hopes for what he [already] sees? **25)** But if we hope for what we cannot see, then we [must] patiently wait for it [to be received].

26) And in the same way, the Holy Spirit helps [us in] our weakness; for we do not know what we ought to pray for [Note: Some translators understand this as "how to pray"]. But the Holy Spirit goes to God on our behalf with groanings [in our hearts] that are not expressed [in words]. **27)** And God, who searches our hearts, knows what the Holy Spirit [has] in mind, because He [i.e., the Holy Spirit] goes to God on behalf of the saints [i.e., God's holy people] in harmony with God's will.

28) And we know that God works out everything for the good of those who love Him and are called [to serve Him] in harmony with His purpose [for them]. **29)** For [that class of] persons whom God knew beforehand He also predetermined to become conformed to the [spiritual] likeness of His Son, so that He could be the firstborn One among [His] many brothers [i.e., so He could be the preeminent example to all His followers. See Heb. 2:11]. **30)** And [that class of] persons whom God [so] predetermined, He also called [through the Gospel. See II Thess. 2:14]. And those He called, He also made right with Himself. And those He made right with Himself, He also [determined to be] honored [i.e., in the future life].

31) What then should we conclude from this? [Just this]: If God is on our side, who can [successfully] oppose us? **32)** God did not withhold His own Son [from dying], but offered Him up for all of us. [Since He did that], will He not, along with Jesus, freely give us everything [else] also? **33)** Who will bring an accusation against

God's chosen people? [Certainly not God, for] He makes people right with Himself. **34)** Who condemns [us]? Certainly not Jesus, for He is the One who died [i.e., to save us], and what is more, He was raised from the dead and is [now] at the right side of God. He also goes [to God] on our behalf [i.e., as we pray]. **35)** Who [i.e., what] can separate us from Christ's love [for us]? [i.e., what unfortunate circumstance of life might suggest that Christ does not love us?] Would [it be] trouble? Or distress? Or persecution? Or inadequate food? Or inadequate clothing? Or danger? Or [even] death? **36)** Just as it is written [Psa. 44:22], "We are [in danger of being] killed all the time. We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." **37)** No, [suffering any one of these things is not proof that Christ does not love us], for in spite of all these things we have a decisive victory [over life's difficulties] through [the care shown us by] Christ who loved us. **38)** For I am convinced that neither death, nor [the trials of] life, nor [evil] angels, nor [evil] rulers, nor present or future [circumstances], nor [evil] powers, **39)** nor [things] above, nor [things] below, nor any [other] created thing will be able to separate us from God's love [for us], revealed through Christ Jesus our Lord [Note: The idea of this passage is "Regardless of what happens to us, God still loves us"].

CHAPTER NINE

1) I am telling [you] the truth in Christ [i.e., since I am a Christian]; I am not lying. My conscience, [confirmed] by the Holy Spirit, supports my statements [as true], **2)** that I have great sorrow and continual anguish in my heart. **3)** For I could wish that I, personally, were cut off from Christ [and lost] for the sake of my brothers, who are my physical relatives, **4)** the Israelites. These people are God's adopted children; they have [experienced] His glorious presence; they have [received] His Agreements; they have been given the law of Moses; they possess the [Temple] service and the promises [of God]. **5)** They are descended from our forefathers; they are the ones from whom Christ was born physically. He is God over everything [Note: Or this may be "God is over everything"] and should be praised forever! May it be so.

6) But it is not as if the word of God [i.e., His promise to Israel] has failed [in its fulfillment]. For not all those descended from the Israelites are [truly] Israelites [i.e., God's people]. **7)** Neither are

all [Jewish] people children [of God], [simply] because they are Abraham's descendants. But [Gen. 21:12 says], "It is through Isaac that you [i.e., Abraham] will have descendants." 8) This means that it is not the physical descendants [of Abraham] who are God's children, but it is the children [born] according to [God's] promise who are [Abraham's true] descendants. 9) For these are the words of the promise [Gen. 18:10], "I [i.e., God] will come at the appointed time and Sarah will have a son."

10) And that is not all, but Rebecca also conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac. 11)-12) For even before the twins were born, and therefore had not done anything good or bad, Rebecca was told [Gen. 25:23], "The older one [i.e., Esau] will serve the younger one [i.e., Jacob]." This was so that God's purpose of choosing and calling [whomever He wanted to] might prevail, instead of [it depending on] what a person did. 13) Just as it is written [Mal. 1:2-3], "I [i.e., God] loved Jacob, but hated Esau."

14) What shall we say then? Is God guilty of wrongdoing? Certainly not! 15) For He said to Moses [Ex. 33:19], "I will show pity to whomever I want, and I will show mercy to whomever I want." 16) So then, it does not depend on what a person wants or does, but on God, who shows pity [i.e., to whomever He wants]. 17) For the Scripture said to Pharaoh [Ex. 9:16], "I raised you up [to be a ruler] for the very purpose of demonstrating my power in your life and that my name might be made known throughout the entire world." 18) So then, God has pity on whomever He wants to, and He makes stubborn whomever He wants.

19) But you [i.e., probably an objecting Jew] will say to me, "Why does God still find fault [with people]? For who can [successfully] resist what God wants to do?" 20) But who [do you think] you are, [you mere] man, to [attempt a] reply to God? Will the object formed [i.e., a clay pot] say to the one who molded it "Why did you make me this way?" 21) Or, does not the potter have the right to make what he wants to out of the clay? Can he not make both a beautiful vase and a common pot out of the same lump [of clay]? 22) What if God [did] patiently put up with people who deserved His wrath and [who were] ready for destruction, even though He was willing to demonstrate His wrath and power? 23) [What if He did this] in order to demonstrate His wealth of glory toward people who deserved His mercy, whom He had previously determined should

receive [such special] honor? 24) We were these people, whom He called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles. 25) God said this also, in Hosea [2:23], "I [i.e., God] will call those people mine who were not [previously] my people. And [I will call] her 'dearly loved' who was not [previously] loved." 26) [Hosea 1:10 says], "And it will happen that in the very place where people were told, 'You people do not belong to me [i.e., God],' they will be called children of the living God."

27) And Isaiah declares about [the nation of] Israel [Isa. 10:22-23], "[Even] if the number of Israelites were [as many] as the grains of sand in the ocean, [still only] a small minority will be saved. 28) For the Lord will carry out His word in the world [i.e., He will require an accounting from the people] quickly and decisively." 29) And, as Isaiah had said in a previous passage [1:9], "If the Lord of the [heavenly] armies [i.e., Almighty God] had not left us some descendants [i.e., a small minority], we would have become like Sodom; He would have made us like Gomorrah [i.e., destroyed]."

30) What shall we say then? [Simply this]: That the Gentiles, who did not attempt to become right with God [by how they lived] were made right with God, and this was the result of their faith [in Christ]. 31) But the Israelites, who were attempting to become right with God by [conformity to] the law of Moses, never achieved [this righteousness] by that law. 32) Why? Because they did not [attempt to do it] by faith [in Him], but by trying to fulfill all the requirements [of the law]. So, they stumbled over "the stumbling stone," [i.e., the Jews refused to become obedient to Christ. See I Pet. 2:6-8]. 33) Even as it is written [Ex. 28:16], "Look, I am placing a stone in the city of Zion that people will stumble over and a rock on which they will trip and fall. But the person who believes in Him will not be put to shame [i.e., he will never have unforgiven sin brought up against him]."

CHAPTER TEN

1) Brothers, my heart's desire and [fervent] request to God is for the salvation of my fellow-Jews. [See 9:3-4]. 2) For I can testify that they have an enthusiasm for God, but it is without [true] knowledge. 3) For they did not know about God's way of making people right with Himself, so they attempted to establish their own way. In doing this they did not submit to God's way for being made

right with Him. 4) So, Christ has brought an end to the law [as a means] of being made right with God for every person who believes [in Him].

5) For Moses wrote [Lev. 18:5] about a person being made right with God by obeying the requirements of the law of Moses, that he would gain [never ending] life for doing this. 6) But the [means of] being made right with God by faith [in Christ] is described in the Scripture this way [Deut. 30:12-13], "Do not ask yourself, 'Who will go up into heaven?'" (in order to bring Christ down [to earth]). 7) "And [do not ask yourself], 'Who will go down into the deep hole?'" (in order to bring Christ up from the dead). [Note: This "deep hole" probably refers to the unseen place of departed spirits, or possibly the grave. Being made right with God does not require something as difficult as bringing Christ down from heaven or up from the dead (which God had already done), but is within easy reach of everyone]. 8) But what does the Scripture say [about being made right with God]? [Deut. 30:14 says], "The message of God is near you [i.e., it is not difficult to comprehend]. It is on your lips and in your heart." This is the message of faith [in Christ] which we [apostles] preach. 9) So, if you profess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe with your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10) For a person believes [in Christ] with his heart in order to be made right with God, and he makes a profession with his lips in order to be saved. 11) For the Scripture says [Isa. 28:16], "Whoever believes in Him [i.e., Christ] will not be put to shame" [i.e., he will never have unforgiven sin brought up against him]. 12) For there is no distinction [with God] between Jews and Greeks [i.e., Gentiles], for all have the same Lord, who is generous to all who appeal to Him [for help]. 13) For [Joel 2:32 says], "Every person who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" [i.e., whoever appeals to God through obedient faith in Christ]. 14) [But] how can they appeal to Him if they have not [first] believed in Him? And how can they believe in Him if they have not [first] heard [about Him]? And how can they hear [about Him] if there is no preacher? 15) And how can people preach [anywhere] unless they are sent out? Even as it is written [Isa. 52:7], "How welcome is the coming of those who preach the good news [of salvation through Christ]?"

16) But not everyone [of the Israelites] obeyed [that] good news. For Isaiah said [Isa. 53:1], "Lord, who has believed our message?" 17) So, faith results from [people] hearing, and [their]

hearing results from [the preaching of] the message about Christ. **18)** But I ask, "Did not they [i.e., the Jews] hear [the message]?" Certainly they did! [Psa. 19:4 says], "The sound [of their preaching] went out into all the world, and their message reached to the ends of the earth." **19)** But I ask [again], "Did not the Israelites understand [the message]?" In the first place, Moses said [Deut. 32:21], "I [i.e., God] will stir up you [Jews] to become jealous, by [favoring] a nation [i.e., the Gentiles] that is unworthy [of your approval]. [I will do it] by using a nation of fools to make you people angry." **20)** Then Isaiah boldly said [Isa. 45:1], "I [i.e., God] was found by a people [i.e., the Gentiles] who were not looking for me. I became known to people who were not asking for me." **21)** But Isaiah said about the Israelites [Isa. 40:2], "I reached out all day long to [help] people who disobeyed and spoke against [me]."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) Then I ask, "Did God reject His [own] people [i.e., the Jews]?" Certainly not! For I am an Israelite too, a descendant of Abraham and a member of the tribe of Benjamin. **2)** God did not reject His people whom He knew previously. Or, do you not know what the Scriptures say in the passage where Elijah pleads with God against Israel? **3)** [I Kings 19:10], "Lord, they [i.e., the Israelites] have killed your prophets and have destroyed your altars; I am the only one left and they are trying to kill me, too." **4)** But how did God answer him? [I Kings 19:18 says], "I [i.e., God] have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed their knee [in worship] to Baal [Note: "Baal" was a term used for one of the idols worshipped in Elijah's day by Canaanites and others in Palestine]. **5)** So, now also, there is a small minority which has been selected by God's unearned favor [i.e., to be saved]. **6)** And if [they were selected] by God's unearned favor, [then] the choice is not based on the good that people may do. Otherwise, God's favor would not be [really] unearned.

7) What then? [Just this]: The very thing that the Israelites are looking for [i.e., a right relationship with God], they have not found. But God's selected ones obtained [this right relationship with Him] and the rest [of the Israelites] were made insensitive to God's call, **8)** as it has been written [Isa. 19:10], "God gave them a spirit of numbness [i.e., they developed a spiritual insensitivity to God and His

word]. [He gave them] eyes to see with [but they would not look], and ears to hear with [but they did not listen]. And they still have this spirit." 9) And King David said [Psa. 69:22-23], "Let their table ensnare and trap them [i.e., let the Jews' devotion to such things as lavish feasts become the occasion for leading them astray], and become an occasion for their falling [away from God]. And let them be repaid [for such conduct with punishment]. 10) Let their eyes become [spiritually] dim so they cannot see, and may their backs always bend [i.e., under heavy burdens]."

11) I say then, did the Jews trip [over Jesus] just so they could fall [away from God]? Certainly not! [There was another reason]: Instead, it was by means of their sin that salvation was made available to the Gentiles, so that the Jews might become jealous of them [i.e., causing them to want what the Gentiles now had]. 12) Now if the Jews sinning meant blessings for [the rest of] the world, and their [spiritual] defection meant blessings for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness [also produce blessings]! [Note: "Fullness" here may mean either a large or the complete number of Jews who will be saved, or become completely obedient to God].

13) Now I am talking to you Gentiles, [and] since I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I will make the most of my ministry [to you], 14) in hope that somehow I might stir up jealousy among my fellow-Jews, and thereby save some of them. 15) For if their rejection [by God] meant that [the rest of] the world could be restored to favor [with God], what would [God's] receiving the Jews back into fellowship be, except like dead people coming back to life? 16) And if the first part of the dough is dedicated to God, the entire batch of dough will be also. And if the roots [of a tree] are dedicated to God, the branches will be also. 17) But some of the branches [of a cultivated olive tree] were broken off [i.e., God's rejection of the Jews] and you [Gentiles], representing a wild olive tree [branch], were grafted into it. So then, you [Gentiles] were able to benefit from the roots and sap of the olive tree, along with the Jews. 18) Therefore, you should not brag [about your superiority] over the [natural] branches [i.e., the rejected Jews]. But, if you must brag, it should not be over you [Gentiles] nourishing the roots [i.e., the Jews], but over the roots nourishing you. 19) But you [Gentiles] will then say, "The branches were broken off so that we could be grafted in." 20) True, but they [i.e., the Jews] were [really] broken off because they did not

believe [in Christ], and you [Gentiles] remain [in God's favor] because you do believe [in Him]. So, do not become arrogant [about it], but be fearful. 21) For if God did not spare the natural branches [i.e., the Jews], He will not spare you [Gentiles] either.

22) So, look at God's kindness and severity. He was severe with those [Jews] who have fallen, but He is kind to you [Gentiles], if you continue to accept His kindness [i.e., by living for Him faithfully]. Otherwise, you too will be cut off [like the Jews were].

23) And these Jews also will be grafted [back] in [to the olive tree] if they do not continue in their lack of faith [in Christ], because God is able to graft them back in again. 24) For you [Gentiles] were cut off from a natural wild olive tree and [then], contrary to the natural process, were grafted into a cultivated olive tree. [Since that has happened], how much more likely is it for these [Jews], who are the natural branches, to be grafted [back] into their own olive tree [again]?

25) For I want you to know this secret, brothers, so you will not become conceited: Part of the Israelites have become [spiritually] insensitive [to God], [and will remain that way] until the fullness of the Gentiles occurs. [Note: As with verse 12, concerning the Jews, "fullness" here may mean either a large or the complete number of Gentiles who will be saved]. 26) And so [i.e., in this way] all the Israelites will be saved. [Note: The "all" here is thought by many to refer to a large number of the physical Jews who will be saved, not necessarily to every single individual Jew]. Even as it is written [Isa. 59:20-21], "The Deliverer [i.e., Christ] will come from Zion [i.e., the city of Jerusalem, or from the nation of Israel]. He will take away the wickedness from Jacob [i.e., the Jews]." 27) [The summary of Jeremiah 31:31-34 says], "And I [i.e., God] will make this Agreement with them [i.e., Jewish and Gentile believers] when I take away their sins."

28) Now in response to the [proclamation of the] good news [about Christ], the Jews became [God's] enemies for the sake of you [Gentiles]. But concerning [God's] select people, these Jews became [God's] dearly loved ones for the sake of their forefathers [i.e., who believed God's promises regarding their descendants]. 29) For God does not change His mind about the gifts He gives and the people He calls [to Him]. 30) For you Gentiles were disobedient to God in the past, but now you have obtained [God's] mercy by means of the disobedience of the Jews. 31) So, now these [same] Jews have also

been disobedient [to God], so that they may also now obtain [God's] mercy by means of the mercy [He has] shown to you [Gentiles]. **32)** For God has made all people prisoners of a disobedient life, so that He could show mercy to everyone.

33) O, how deep is the richness of God's wisdom and knowledge! How difficult [it is for us] to explain His judgments and how impossible [for us] to accurately track how He operates! **34)** [Note: The following are rhetorical questions raised from their reading of the Old Testament]: For who has known [what goes on in] the Lord's mind? Or, who has been His advisor? **35)** Or, who has given [something] to God that He has to pay back? **36)** For everything was created by Him, exists through His [power] and is intended for His [glory]. May He be praised forever. May it be so.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1) So, I urge you, brothers, because God is so merciful [to us], to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, [fully] dedicated and very pleasing to God. For this is a reasonable [or spiritual] way for you to worship [or serve] Him. **2)** And you people must not be conformed to [the values and standards of] this age, but you should become transformed [i.e., changed in attitude and action] by having your mind renewed [i.e., to think in a totally different way]. Then you will be able to determine [and practice] God's will, the thing that is good, and acceptable and perfect.

3) And because of God's unearned favor shown to me [i.e., in appointing me to be an apostle], I am telling every person among you not to think he is more important than he really is. Instead, he should have a sensible estimate [of his gifts] in harmony with the degree of faith God has given to each person. **4)** For there are many parts to a single human body and all of these parts do not have the same function. **5)** In the same way, though we [Christians] are many, we are one [spiritual] body in [fellowship with] Christ, and each one of us is part of [all] the others. **6)** And we [all] have different gifts, in harmony with the unearned favor [God has] shown us. If our gift is the ability to prophecy [i.e., to speak for God], we should make use of this gift in harmony with the amount of faith we have. **7)** Or, if our gift is serving, we should devote ourselves to rendering service. Or, if our gift is teaching, we should devote ourselves to teaching. **8)** Or,

if our gift is encouraging others, we should devote ourselves to encouraging. Or, if our gift is sharing with others, we should do so generously. Or, if our gift is leading others, we should do so diligently. Or, if our gift is showing caring concern for others, we should do it cheerfully.

9) Let [your] love be sincere. Hate whatever is evil. Cling to whatever is good. 10) In your love for your brothers, show tender affection toward one another. Try to outdo one another in showing respect [for each other]. 11) Be enthusiastic instead of lazy. Be fervent in your spirit [Note: Some translators take "spirit" here to refer to the "Holy Spirit"], [as you] serve the Lord. 12) Be joyful as you hope [i.e., for future blessings]. Persevere in spite of the troubles you experience. Continue steadfastly in prayer. 13) Contribute to the needs of God's people. Be eager in showing hospitality. 14) Ask God's blessing on people who persecute you, instead of cursing them. 15) Be happy with those who are joyful. Cry with those who are sad. 16) Have the same [good] thoughts toward one another. Do not [always] be thinking you are a "bigshot," but lower yourself to accept humble tasks [or, humble people]. Do not think you are so smart. 17) Do not [try to] pay back a wrong done to you by doing something wrong to the other person. Think about how to live honorably in front of all people. 18) If it is at all possible, as far as your part is concerned, live peacefully with all people. 19) Do not take revenge on someone who has wronged you, but leave it up to God's wrath [to take care of it], for it is written [Deut. 22:35], "The Lord says, I will pay people back [for doing wrong] because taking revenge belongs to me." 20) But [Prov. 25:21-25 says], "Feed your enemy if he is hungry; give him something to drink if he is thirsty. For when you do this, it will be [like] heaping burning coals on his head." [i.e., it can cause him burning shame that can lead to his repentance and ultimate forgiveness]. 21) [So], do not be conquered by evil, but [instead] conquer evil by doing good.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) Every person must be submissive to the ruling authorities, for all authorities come from God. And the existence of authorities has been established by God. 2) Therefore, the person who resists

[these] authorities is opposing what God has ordained. And those who oppose [these authorities] will bring judgment on themselves. 3) For [our] rulers are not a threat to [the person doing] a good deed, but to [the person doing] an evil one. So, do you want to avoid having to be afraid of the authorities? Then do what is good and you will be commended by them [generally]. 4) For they are servants of God for your good. But you should be afraid if you do what is evil, because they do not carry the sword [i.e., for executing criminals] for nothing. For they are servants of God who take revenge [on wrongdoing] by punishing the person who does evil. 5) Therefore, you must submit [to the authorities], not only because of [the threat of] punishment, but also for the sake of [your] conscience.

6) This is the reason why you should pay taxes also. For the authorities are God's servants who continually tend to this matter [i.e., of collecting taxes]. 7) [So], pay everyone what you owe them; pay taxes to the tax collector; pay revenue to the revenue collector; show respect to the one deserving it; give honor to the one deserving it.

8) Do not owe anything to anyone, except to love one another. For the person who loves others has fulfilled [the requirements of] the law. 9) For [the commandments are: Ex. 20:13ff], "You must not be sexually unfaithful to your mate. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not have a strong desire for what belongs to someone else." These and any other commandments are summed up in these words, "You must love your neighbor the same as you love yourself." 10) If you love your neighbor, you will not do anything wrong to him. So, to love people is the way to fulfill [the requirements of] the law [See Matt. 22:39].

11) Now this [is another reason for observing the law of love]: You should know that it is about time to wake up out of your [spiritual] sleep, because [the day of our final] salvation is now nearer to us than when we first believed [in Christ]. 12) The night is almost over and the day is near. So, we should stop doing the deeds of darkness [i.e., sinful things] and we should arm ourselves with the weapons of light [i.e., virtues for right living]. 13) We should be living properly, as in the daytime [i.e., when people normally behave themselves], not engaging in orgies and drunkenness; not practicing sexual immorality and indecent vices; not quarrelsome and jealous. 14) But clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and do not make any plans for satisfying the strong desires of your flesh [i.e., your

appetites for sinful pleasures].

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1) But you should welcome [into your fellowship] the person whose faith is weak, and not argue [with him] over questionable matters. 2) One person has enough faith that allows him to eat anything [i.e., without it bothering his conscience that the food, such as animal meat, was used in an idolatrous worship ceremony]. But the weak person can eat only vegetables [conscientiously]. 3) The person who can eat anything should not look down on the person who cannot eat [what was used in idolatrous worship]; and the person who cannot eat [such things] should not pass judgment on the person who can. For God accepts that person, too. 4) Who [do you think] you are, to pass judgment on someone else's household servant? He stands [approved] or falls [into disapproval] before his own Master [only]. Yes, [surely] he will stand [approved], for the Lord is capable of helping him to stand.

5) One person regards a certain day more important than another; the next person regards every day alike. Each person should be fully convinced in his own mind [i.e., concerning their relative importance]. 6) The person who observes a certain day [as specially sacred], does so out of devotion to the Lord. And the person who eats [only certain foods] does so out of devotion to the Lord, for he is thankful to God [for what he eats]. And the person who refuses to eat [certain foods], does so out of devotion to the Lord and he is thankful to God [for what he does eat]. 7) For none of us lives for his own benefit [only], and none of us dies for his own benefit [only]. 8) For if we live, it is for the Lord's [honor]; or if we die, it is for the Lord's [honor]. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

9) For this is the reason that Christ died and [now] lives again, so that He could be Lord of both those who have [already] died and those who are [still] alive. 10) But why do you [who eat only certain foods] condemn your brother [who feels he can eat anything]? Or, indeed, why do you [i.e., who feels he can eat anything] look down on your brother [i.e., who eats only certain foods]? For all of us will have to stand before the judgment bar of God. 11) For it is written [Isa. 45:23], "As surely as I am the living God, says the Lord, everyone's knee will bow before me, and everyone's mouth will

confess to [or, praise] God." 12) So then, every one of us [i.e., including Christians] will have to give an account of himself to God.

13) So, we should stop judging one another any more. But instead, you people should determine not to put anything in your brother's way [to cause him] to trip or fall [away from God]. 14) As one who is in [fellowship with] the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that nothing in itself is [ceremonially] unclean. But to the person who considers something [ceremonially] unclean, it then becomes unclean to him. 15) For if your brother is hurt [spiritually] by [your eating a certain] food, you are no longer acting lovingly [toward him]. Do not destroy [spiritually] the person Christ died for by what you eat. 16) Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken against [i.e., the exercise of a liberty by the strong to eat anything must not become the occasion of criticism by the weak]. 17) For God's kingdom is not a matter of what people eat or drink, but [instead, it is a matter] of doing what is right, having peace [of heart] and having [inner] joy, which come from the Holy Spirit. 18) For the person who serves Christ with these qualities is very pleasing to God and wins the approval of people. 19) So then, let us pursue such things that produce peace and things that build one another up [spiritually]. 20) Do not destroy God's work [i.e., someone's life] for the sake of something to eat. All foods are truly clean [ceremonially]; however, it is wrong for a person to eat something when it causes another person to fall [away from God]. 21) [So], it is better [for you] not to eat bread, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything [else] that could cause your brother to fall [away from God]. 22) Therefore, whatever you believe about this matter should be held between you and God. That person is happy who does not condemn himself for practicing something he believes is right. 23) But the person who has doubts about eating [a certain food] is self-condemned if he [goes ahead and] eats it, because his action is not based on faith [i.e., if he lacks the conviction that he is doing what is right]. And whatever is not done with such a conviction is a sin.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1) Now those of us who are strong [spiritually] should put up with [or, help] the failings of [spiritually] weak people, and not

[simply] do what pleases ourselves. 2) [Instead], each of us should do what pleases his neighbor in order to accomplish something good and uplifting [in his life]. 3) For even Christ did not please [just] Himself, but as it is written [Psa. 69:9], "The insults of those people who insulted you [i.e., God] fell on me [i.e., Christ]." 4) For whatever things were written previously [i.e., in the Old Testament], were intended for us to learn from, so that we could have hope [i.e., in the face of difficult times] through remaining steadfast, and through the encouragement [received] from reading the Scriptures.

5) May God [who is the source] of steadfastness and encouragement, give you [a sense of] likemindedness among yourselves, in harmony with [the example of] Christ Jesus, 6) so that in [genuine] unity and with one voice, you people may honor the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7) So, welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you [or, "us"], as a way of honoring God. 8) For I tell you that Christ was [appointed] to be a servant of the circumcised ones [i.e., the Jews], in order to uphold the truth of God. This was so He could confirm [as valid] the promises made to our forefathers, 9) and so that the Gentiles [also] may honor God for His mercy, as it is written [Psa. 18:49], "Therefore, I will praise you among the Gentiles and sing to your name." [Note: Paul here accommodates the words of King David by applying them to Jews participating with Gentiles in praising God as part of the one body]. 10) And again it says [Deut. 32:43], "Rejoice with His people [i.e., the Jews], you Gentiles." 11) And again [Psa. 117:1], "Praise the Lord, all of you Gentiles, and let all the nations praise Him." 12) And again, Isaiah says [11:10], "A root [i.e., a descendant] from Jesse will appear [i.e., Christ], and He will rise up to rule over the nations, and the Gentiles will place their hope in Him."

13) May God, [the source] of hope, fill you with complete joy and peace as you believe [in Christ], so that you may have an abundance of hope in the power of the Holy Spirit.

14) And I, myself, am convinced about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, and have been filled with all kinds of knowledge and are capable of counselling one another. 15) But I have written to you quite boldly in some places to remind you [of certain things], because of the favor shown to me by God, 16) in appointing me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. I am serving like a priest in preaching God's good news, so that the Gentiles might be like an acceptable sacrifice [to God], dedicated by

the Holy Spirit.

17) Therefore, as I have fellowship with Christ Jesus, I am proud of my service to God. 18) For I will not dare to speak about anything, except what Christ has done through me in bringing about the obedience of the Gentiles. He accomplished this by my message and my deeds, 19) in the power demonstrated by [miraculous] signs and wonders, [produced] by the power of the Holy Spirit. So, I have completed preaching the good news about Christ from Jerusalem, all the way around [the area] to Illyricum [Note: This country was located northwest of Greece and in present-day Croatia]. 20) Now it has been my ambition to preach the good news at places where Christ's name has never been heard, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. 21) But, as it is written [Isa. 52:15], "Those people who had not been told about Him will see [the truth], and those who have not heard [the message] will understand [it]." [Note: Paul here applies a Messianic prediction to his ambition of doing pioneer evangelism].

22) This is why I have been so often hindered from coming to you. 23) But now, since I do not have any more [new] places [to preach] in this area, and have been wanting to visit you for many years, 24) I am hoping to see you when I travel to Spain. And I also hope to receive help from you in getting there [i.e., to Spain], after enjoying a brief visit with you. 25) But for now, I am on my way to Jerusalem to minister to [the needs of] God's holy people there. 26) For [the Christians in] Macedonia and Achaia [Note: These were provinces in Greece] thought it was a good idea to take up an offering for the poor saints at Jerusalem. 27) For they thought it was a good idea, and [besides] they were indebted to those Jewish Christians. For if the Gentiles [have] shared in the spiritual blessings of the Jews, [then] they owe it to those Jews to help meet their material needs. 28) So, when I have completed this task, and have guaranteed [the safe delivery of] this offering to them, I will visit you on my way to Spain. 29) And I know that when I arrive there [in Rome], I will be coming with an abundance of Christ's blessings [to give to you. See 1:11-12].

30) Now I urge you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ [See 12:1], and through the Holy Spirit's love [in us], that you people join me in fervently praying to God for me 31) to be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea [i.e., unbelieving Jews]. And [pray] that my service for Jerusalem [i.e., the offering for poor people. See verses 25-26] will be acceptable to God's people there.

32) And pray that I will [be able to] come to you joyfully, if it is God's will, and have a refreshing visit with you. **33)** Now may the God of peace be with all of you. May it be so.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1) I recommend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church at Cenchrea. [Note: This was a seaport town about seven miles east of Corinth]. **2)** Welcome her [as someone to fellowship] in the Lord, in a way that God's people should. And you people should help her in whatever way she needs you, for she herself has helped many people, including me.

3) I send greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow-workers in [the service of] Christ Jesus. **4)** They risked their own lives for me, so not only I, but also all the Gentile churches [i.e., people converted from among the Gentiles] are grateful to them [for this]. **5)** I also send greetings to the church that meets in their house. Greetings to my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia [Note: This was a province in the western part of present-day Turkey]. **6)** Greetings to Mary, who worked very hard for you [i.e., she served the church in Rome]. **7)** Greetings to Andronicus and Junias, my fellow-Jews [or possibly actual relatives] who were in prison with me. These [men] are considered outstanding by the apostles, and were Christians before I was [converted]. **8)** Greetings to Ampliatus, my dear friend in [the fellowship of] the Lord. **9)** Greetings to Urbanus, our fellow-worker in [the service of] Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. **10)** Greetings to Apelles, [who was tested and] approved in [the service of] Christ. Greetings to members of the family of Aristobulus. **11)** Greetings to Herodion, my fellow-Jew [See verse 7]. Greetings to those members of the family of Narcissus who are Christians. **12)** Greetings to Tryphena and Tryphosa, who are workers in [the service of] the Lord and to Persis, my dear friend who worked hard in [the service of] the Lord. **13)** Greetings to Rufus, an outstanding servant in [the service of] the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me also. **14)** Greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the [other] brothers who are with them. **15)** Greetings to Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all [the others] of God's people who are with them. **16)** Greet one another

with a holy kiss [i.e., to signify affection, yet without sensuality]. All of the churches of Christ [i.e., which Paul established or preached in] send you their greetings.

17) Now I urge you, brothers, watch out for those who are causing divisions and occasions for falling [away from God over matters] contrary to the teaching you have learned, and withdraw from them [i.e., stop listening to their false teaching]. 18) For such men are not serving our Lord Christ but their own [unspiritual] appetites. They are deceiving the minds of innocent people by their smooth talk and flattering words. 19) For everyone has heard about your obedience [to the truth], and [because of this], I am very happy over you. But I want you to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil. 20) And the God, who brings peace, will soon crush Satan under your feet. [i.e., bring an end to the divisive work of the false teachers there].

May the unearned favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

21) My fellow-worker Timothy sends his greetings to you, and so do my fellow-Jews Lucius, Jason and Sosipater. [See verse 7].

22) I am Tertius, who is writing this letter [for Paul], and I send you my greetings in [the fellowship of] the Lord.

23) Gaius, who is hosting me [i.e., Paul] and the whole church [here], sends you his greetings. [Note: This was probably the Gaius who lived in Corinth (I Cor. 1:14) and was apparently both wealthy and generous].

Erastus, the city treasurer [of Corinth] sends his greetings to you, along with our brother Quartus. {{Some manuscripts contain verse 24), which repeats the benediction of verse 20}}.

25)-27) Now may there be glory for ever, through Jesus Christ, to the only wise God, who is able to make you stand firm [in the faith], according to the good news and proclamation of Jesus Christ. This message is the secret which was [eventually] revealed, after having been kept quiet about for long ages. It is now being made known through the writings of the prophets, as commanded by the eternal God, to [people of] all the nations, in order to bring about their obedience to the faith [i.e., so they will believe and obey the truth]. May it be so.

I CORINTHIANS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] Paul, who was called by the will of God to be an apostle, and [from] our brother Sosthenes; 2) [it is being sent] to the church of God at Corinth. [You people are] set apart in [the fellowship of] Christ and called [by God] to be saints [i.e., His holy people], along with all [others] everywhere who call on our Lord Jesus Christ [i.e., in prayer]. He is their Lord and ours [as well]. 3) May you experience unearned favor and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4) I always thank God for you, [especially] for God's unearned favor that was given to you [in providing salvation and blessings] in Christ Jesus. 5) For in [fellowship with] Him you people have been made [spiritually] rich in every way, through all [kinds of] speech and knowledge. [Note: This probably refers to the communication and comprehension of truth represented by the spiritual gifts of languages and revelation]. 6) The message about Christ has become firmly established there among you [i.e., by such gifts], 7) so that you are not lacking in any [spiritual] gift, while you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed [i.e., at His second coming]. 8) He will also make you stand firm [in the faith] to the end [of your lives], so that you will be [considered] without just blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ [returns]. 9) God is faithful [i.e., He will continue working among you] and it is through Him that you were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

10) Now I urge you, brothers, through the name [i.e., by the authority] of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you should all agree in what you say, so that no divisions [continue] among you. Be restored [to unity] by having common thoughts and convictions [i.e., in spiritual matters]. 11) For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers, by some of Chloe's family, that there is quarrelling [going on] among you. 12) Now this is what I mean: Each of you is saying, "I am a follower of Paul," and another "I am a follower of Apollos," and another "I am a follower of Cephas [i.e., Peter]," and another "I am a follower of Christ." 13) Has Christ been divided? Was Paul

crucified for you? Or were you immersed into the name of Paul? **14)** I am thankful that I did not immerse any of you, except for Crispus and Gaius, **15)** so that none of you could say that you were immersed into my name. **16)** (Oh, yes, I also immersed the family of Stephanas. Besides these, I do not remember immersing anyone else). **17)** For Christ did not send me to immerse people, but to preach the good news. [Note: Christ specifically commissioned Paul to preach; most of the immersing was done by his attendants]. It was not to be done with words of [human] wisdom, so that the [message of the] cross of Christ would not have its power taken away.

18) For the message of [Christ dying on] the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing [i.e., in a lost state], but it is God's power to us who are being saved. **19)** For it is written [Isa. 29:14], "I [i.e., God] will destroy the wisdom of wise people, and will set aside [i.e., hinder] the understanding of intelligent people." **20)** Where is the wise person? And where is the expert in the law? [And] where is the debater of this world? **21)** For since, according to God's [true] wisdom, the world did not know about Him through its wisdom, God was pleased to save those who believe [in Christ] through the "foolishness" of the message preached. **22)** Now Jews ask for [miraculous] signs and Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] are looking for wisdom, **23)** but we [apostles] preach that Christ was crucified [for our sins]. This message is offensive to Jews and foolishness to [unconverted] Gentiles. **24)** But to those who are called [by God to be saved], both Jews and Gentiles, [the message of] Christ is the power of God [See 1:16] and the wisdom of God [See 1:30]. **25)** For the "foolish things" of God are wiser than men's [wisdom], and the "weakness" of God is stronger than men's [strength].

26) Now consider how you were when you were called, brothers. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were from prominent families. **27)** But God chose what the world considers foolish [i.e., people with little apparent ability], in order to shame the "wise people." And He chose what the world considers weak in order to shame what it considers strong. **28)** And He chose what the world considers insignificant and contemptible, and [even] what it considers "nothing," in order to nullify what appears to be something. **29)** This was all done so that no human being could boast in front of God. **30)** But God brought you into [fellowship with] Christ Jesus, who was made to be God's

wisdom for us. Through Christ you have received a right relationship with God, [as well as] holiness and redemption [i.e., being bought back from Satan]. 31) So, as it is written [Jer. 9:23f], "The person who [wants to] boast, let him boast about the Lord."

CHAPTER TWO

1) And when I came to you, brothers, it was not with eloquent words or [superior] wisdom that I proclaimed to you the testimony [or, mystery] about God. 2) For I have decided not to know anything [while] among you, except Jesus Christ and His being crucified. 3) And I was weak, apprehensive and fearful when I was [there] with you. [Note: This probably refers to Paul's sense of inadequacy in view of the task before him]. 4) And I did not use persuasive words of [human] wisdom in my message and preaching, but they were [accompanied by] a demonstration of the Holy Spirit and power [from God]. [Note: This "demonstration" could have included the evidence of miraculous spiritual gifts which Paul utilized while there in Corinth. See 14:18]. 5) This was so that your faith would not [have to] depend on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

6) However, we speak [divine] wisdom among people who are [spiritually] mature, yet it is not a wisdom of this current age, nor of [its] current rulers, who are coming to nothing. 7) But we [apostles] speak God's secret wisdom, which has been hidden [through the ages], which God predetermined for our honor before time began. 8) None of the rulers of this age knew about this [divine] wisdom, for if they had [known it], they would not have crucified the glorious Lord [i.e., Jesus]. 9) But as it is written [Isa. 64:4], "The things which no eye saw or ear heard, and which did not [even] enter the mind of men, is what God has prepared for those who love Him." 10) But God has revealed [to us] these things [i.e., His divine wisdom. See verses 7-8] through the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Spirit searches everything, even the deep things of God. 11) For what person knows the thoughts of a man except that man's [own] spirit which is in him? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except God's Holy Spirit. 12) But we [apostles] did not receive the spirit of the world [i.e., human wisdom. See verse 6], but the Holy Spirit from God, so that we could understand what was freely given to us from God. [i.e., the gift of inspiration. See verses 9-10]. 13) These also are the things we [apostles] speak, not in words taught by

human wisdom, but [in words] taught by the Holy Spirit. We use [or, combine] Spirit-taught words to express [or, with] Spirit-given truth. **14)** Now the natural person [Note: Since this person is contrasted with the spiritual person of verse 15, it is taken here to mean the person without the Holy Spirit] does not receive the things [i.e., truths] revealed by the Holy Spirit of God, because they are [considered] foolishness to him. And he cannot understand them because they must be discerned by using spiritual judgment [i.e., judgment aided by the Holy Spirit]. **15)** But the spiritual person [i.e., one who has the Holy Spirit] is able to discern all things [i.e., has the ability to make right judgments about things], and he himself [i.e., his conduct] cannot be [critically] discerned by any [unbelieving] man. **16)** [Isa. 40:13 says], "For who knows [what is in] the Lord's mind? And who is capable of instructing Him? But we have the mind of Christ. [Note: The "we" may refer to the apostles, who had the gift of inspiration (See verse 12), or to all Christians who have spiritual discernment].

CHAPTER THREE

1) And I could not speak to you, brothers, as I would to spiritual people, but [I have to speak to you] as I would to worldly people, for you are immature children in [the fellowship of] Christ. **2)** For I fed you with milk, not with solid food [i.e., with basic fundamentals instead of more advanced teaching. See Heb. 5:12-13] because you were not able to absorb it, **3)** for you are still worldly [minded]. And since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, is that not evidence that you are [still] worldly and living like [unspiritual] people? **4)** For when one of you says, "I am a follower of Paul," and another says, "I am a follower of Apollos," are you not [acting like worldly] people? **5)** After all, who is Apollos? And who is Paul? They are [only] servants through whom you believed [in Christ], with each one doing what the Lord gave him to do. **6)** I [Paul] planted [i.e., preached God's word], Apollos watered [it], but God made it grow. **7)** So then, it does not matter who plants or who waters, but [it is] God who matters, for He makes the seed grow. **8)** Now the person who plants and the person who waters have the same [purpose], and each one will receive his own wages, according to the work each one does. **9)** For we are all fellow-workers in God's service; you people are God's farm land; [you are] God's building.

10) Using the unearned favor shown to me by God [Note: Paul

here probably refers to his apostleship and its attending spiritual gifts], as an expert building contractor, I laid the foundation [i.e., in starting the Corinthian church], and someone else is building on it [i.e., Apollos. See verse 6]. **11)** For no one can lay [any] other foundation than the one which [God] has [already] laid, which is Jesus Christ. **12)** But if anyone [i.e., a preacher or soul winner] builds on this foundation with gold, silver, expensive building stones, wood, grass, or straw, **13)** [the quality of] each person's work will become evident [i.e., for what is it made of]. For the [judgment] day will expose his workmanship. And it will be revealed by the fire [of judgment], which will test the quality of a person's workmanship [i.e., the faithfulness of his converts]. **14)** If the work of anyone lasts [i.e., if his converts are judged faithful], he will receive a reward [i.e., his converts will constitute part of his reward]. **15)** But if anyone's work is burned up [i.e., does not survive the judgment], he will experience loss [i.e., of his converts], but he himself will [still] be saved, like a person escaping from the fire [i.e., of a burning building, which consumes his efforts].

16) Do you people not know that you are God's Temple [i.e., the church. See I Pet. 2:5; I Tim. 3:15], and that the Holy Spirit of God lives in you [i.e., collectively]? **17)** If any person destroys God's Temple, God will destroy him. For God's Temple is holy [i.e., set apart for His service], and you people are His [holy] Temple.

18) No one should fool himself. If any person among you thinks he is smart, by human standards, he should become a "fool," so that he can become [really] wise. **19)** For this world's "wisdom" is foolishness to God. For it is written [Job 5:13], "He [i.e., God] catches wise people in their cleverness." **20)** And again, it says [Psa. 94:11], "The Lord knows that the thoughts of 'wise people' are worthless." **21)** So, no one should boast about [the knowledge or position of] people. For all things belong to you, **22)** including Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas [i.e., Peter], and the world, and life and death, and present and future things. All of these things are yours. [Note: Paul is showing that, as Christians, they really possessed and should value all preachers and circumstances of life alike]. **23)** And you people belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

CHAPTER FOUR

1) So, a person should look at us as servants of Christ and property managers entrusted with the secret truths of God. 2) Furthermore, one thing required of [good] property managers is that they prove dependable. 3) But it is a small matter for me to be judged by you or by any human court, for I do not [even] judge myself [to be wrong]. 4) For I am not aware of anything [wrong] against myself, but that does not make me right. But the One who judges me is the Lord. 5) So, do not judge anything until the appointed time, when the Lord returns [i.e., to do the judging]. He will both shed light on the hidden things done in the dark and make known the motives of people's hearts. Then each person [i.e., who deserves it] will receive praise from God.

6) Now I have applied these things, brothers, to myself and to Apollos as an illustration for your benefit, so that you might learn to "follow the written message." [Note: This is thought to have been a common way of referring, in that day, to the importance of adhering to Old Testament Scripture]. So, none of you should be more proud of one [leader] than of another. 7) For who makes you different [from each other]? [i.e., with some being viewed as superior and others inferior]. And what do you have that you did not receive [from God]? But if you received it [from Him], then why do you boast as though you did not [receive it as a gift]? 8) [Now] you already have all you want! You have already become wealthy! You have begun to rule as kings without our help! How I wish that you had [really] begun to rule as kings, so that we also could rule with you! 9) For I think that God has displayed us apostles last in line, as men doomed to die. [Note: The picture here is that of gladiators in the arena]. We are being stared at [i.e., as performers on a theater stage] for the whole world to see, both angels and people. 10) We are "fools" for Christ's sake, but you people [think you] are "wise" in [the fellowship of] Christ. We are weak, but you people [think you] are "strong." You are honored, but we are despised. 11) Even to this moment, we [apostles] are hungry and thirsty; we have inadequate clothing; we have been beaten; we do not have a permanent place to live; 12) we work hard with our hands. [Though] we are cursed, we [ask God's] blessing [on people]; [though] we are persecuted, we persevere; 13) [though] we are slandered, we reply kindly. We have become [like] the scum of the earth, the dregs of all

society, to this day.

14) I am not writing this to shame you but to warn you, as my dearly loved children. **15)** For although you have ten thousand guardians [Note: This word means someone who transported a child to his teacher] in [the fellowship of] Christ, you do not have many [spiritual] fathers. For I [spiritually] conceived you people through [preaching to you] the good news [about Christ]. [Note: Paul here refers to his work in establishing the church at Corinth]. **16)** So, I urge you to imitate my lifestyle. **17)** This is the reason that I am sending Timothy to you. He is my dearly loved and faithful [spiritual] son in [the service of] the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways [i.e., my teaching and conduct] which are in [the service of] Christ. I teach these things in every congregation wherever [I go].

18) Now some of you have become arrogant, thinking that I would not [dare to] come to you. **19)** But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wants me to. Then I will determine not [only] what these arrogant people are saying, but how much power they have. **20)** For God's kingdom is not a matter of [impressive] words, but of [spiritual] power. **21)** Which do you [really] want? Shall I come to you with a rod [of discipline], or lovingly, and with a spirit of gentleness?

CHAPTER FIVE

1) It has actually been reported [to me] that there is a case of sexual immorality among you that is unheard of, even among the [unconverted] Gentiles. One of you is having sex with his stepmother. **2)** And you are arrogant [about it] instead [of being ashamed]. Should you not be grieved to the point of removing from your fellowship the person who has done this [terrible] deed? **3)** For although physically absent [from you], I am truly present with you in spirit and have already judged the person who did this [terrible] thing, just as if I were there [in person]. **4)** [I command you], when you people are assembled together, with my spirit [also present], in the name [i.e., by the authority] and power of our Lord Jesus, **5)** to turn such a person over to Satan for his body to be destroyed [Note: This probably refers to his removal from their fellowship. See verse 2], in order for his spirit to be saved in the day of the Lord [i.e., the judgment day]. [Note: This implies that his removal from their fellowship will have produced a genuine repentance before that time].

6) Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little yeast can leaven the whole batch of dough? 7) Get rid of the old yeast [i.e., of sin, and especially the unrepentant sinner], so that you can be a new batch of dough, without yeast in it [i.e., a godly church without unrepentant sinners in it] as [I know] you really are. For our Passover [Lamb], Christ, has already been sacrificed. 8) So, we should observe the Festival [i.e., live the Christian life], but not with the old yeast [i.e., old sinful ways], such as the leavening [effect] of evil and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

9) I wrote you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. 10) I did not mean the sexually immoral people of this world, or with greedy people and swindlers, or with idolaters. For [to do this] you would have to go out of the world. [Note: If taken literally, this implies that there are no sinful people outside our planet]. 11) But I wrote to you not to associate with anyone claiming to be a [Christian] brother who is [guilty of being] sexually immoral, or greedy, or an idolater, or who speaks abusively, or a drunkard, or a swindler. Do not even eat [a social meal] with such a person. 12)-13) For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? [i.e., non-Christians]; God judges them. But should you not judge those people who are inside? [i.e., Christians]. [So], remove the evil person from your fellowship [See Deut. 17:7].

CHAPTER SIX

1) If any one of you has a complaint against someone, how can you dare to take it before non-Christian judges [to be decided], instead of before the saints [i.e., God's holy people]? 2) Or, do you not know that God's people will judge the world? [Note: Possibly this refers to Christians somehow assisting Christ on the judgment day]. And if the world is [to be] judged by you [at that time], are you not capable of judging small matters [now]? 3) Do you not know that we will judge [even] angels? [And if so], then how much more [must we judge] the things of this life! 4) So then, if you have cases [or, courts] for deciding matters of this life, do you appoint [as judges] those who have no standing in the church? [i.e., heathens]. [Note: This difficult passage may also be taken as a statement, using sarcasm, "you appoint as judges..."]. 5) I am saying this to make you ashamed. Can there not be found one wise person [there] among you who is able to decide [on a matter] between his [Christian] brothers? 6) But [instead], a brother goes to court against his brother,

and that in front of an unbelieving [judge]! 7) Indeed, the fact that you have lawsuits with one another is [evidence of] a complete failure among you. Why should you not rather take the wrong? Why should you not rather accept being cheated? 8) But [instead], you yourselves do the wrong and cheat [others], and you do this to [Christian] brothers!

9) Or, do you not know that evil people will not possess God's kingdom? Do not be misled: neither will sexually immoral people, nor idolaters, nor those who are sexually unfaithful to their mates, nor homosexual perverts. [Note: The Greek uses two words here, denoting both the passive and active partners in male homosexual acts]. 10) And neither will thieves, nor greedy people, nor drunkards, nor abusive talkers, nor swindlers possess God's kingdom. 11) And some of you have practiced such things, but you were washed [i.e., from your sins. See Acts 22:16]; you were dedicated [i.e., set apart for God's service]; you were made right with God in the name [i.e., by the authority] of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit of our God.

12) "Everything is permissible for me [to do];" but not everything is profitable. [Note: The words in quote marks in this and the following verse are thought to have been commonly held views of that day, to which Paul gives an inspired reply]. "Everything is permissible for me [to do];" but I will not be ruled by anything. 13) "Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food;" but God will destroy both of them. Yet the body is not intended for sexual immorality, but is intended for the Lord's [honor and service]; and the Lord is for the body's [benefit]. 14) Now God has both raised up the Lord [Jesus], and will [also] raise us up [from the dead] through His power. 15) Do you not know that your [physical] bodies are parts of [the spiritual body of] Christ? So, shall I take away parts of Christ's [spiritual] body and join them to a prostitute's body? Certainly not! 16) Or, do you not know that the person who is joined to a prostitute is one body [with her, physically]? For God says [Gen. 2:24], "The two will become one flesh." [i.e., united in such a close relationship as to practically constitute one body]. 17) But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit [with Him]. [Note: Just as the person who has sex with someone enters a close physical union with that person, so the person who becomes a Christian enters a close spiritual union with Christ]. 18) Stay away from [any involvement in] sexual immorality. Every sin a person commits is outside [the realm] of his body; but the one who commits sexual immorality sins against his

own body. [Note: Possibly this means that sex, because it requires the deepest and most complete commitment of human involvement, becomes a unique sin when its true purpose and expression are violated]. **19)** Or, do you not know that your [physical] body is a temple [i.e., sanctuary] for the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves, **20)** for you were bought [by God] for a price. So, honor God with your [physical] body.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1) I now want to reply to the matters you people wrote me about. It is [a] good [idea] for a man not to get married. [Note: The words "to get married" here are "to touch" in the Greek and probably refer to sexual relations within marriage. This advice, not a prohibition, is further explained in verses 26-35]. **2)** But, because of so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. **3)** The husband should fulfill his [marital] duty to his wife, and the wife should do the same thing for her husband. **4)** The wife does not have [sole] authority over her own [physical] body, but the husband [also has his right to it]. And in the same way, the husband also does not have [sole] authority over his own [physical] body, but the wife [i.e., has her right to it, as well]. **5)** Do not deprive each other [of these marital rights], except by mutual agreement, so that you can spend the time in prayer. Then resume [normal sexual] relations again, so Satan is not able to tempt you [i.e., to have an affair] because of your lack of self-control. **6)** But I am telling you this by way of [granting you] permission and not as a command. **7)** Yet I wish that everyone were like me [i.e., with the ability to remain single. See 9:5]. However, each person has his own special gift from God; one has this gift [i.e., being content to remain single. See Matt. 19:12], and another has the other gift [i.e., feeling the need to marry and have a family].

8) Now to those people who are not married [Note: This probably refers to all unmarried people, and not just to widowers, as some think], or who are widows, I say it is [a] good [idea] for them to remain like me [i.e., single. See verse 7 and 9:5]. **9)** But if they cannot control their [sexual] desires, they should get married, for it is better [for them] to marry than to burn [i.e., with sexual lust which cannot be legitimately gratified]. **10)** Now I command married people, although it is [really] the Lord's command [See. Mark 10:2-12]: A wife should not separate

from her husband. [Note: This act implies the intention of pursuing a legal and permanent breach of the marriage relationship by divorce. "Separate" and "divorce" appear to be used interchangeably in this section. See verses 11-15]. **11)** (But if she does separate [from her husband], she should remain unmarried, or else [attempt] a reconciliation with her husband). And a husband should not divorce his wife.

12) But I, not the Lord, say this to the rest of you [Note: Paul now addresses the matter of mixed marriages, a circumstance Jesus never taught about]: If any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she agrees to continue living with him [Note: In these verses Paul addresses a situation where one marriage partner is converted after they are married], he should not divorce her. **13)** And the woman with a husband who is an unbeliever, who agrees to continue living with her, should not divorce her husband. **14)** For the unbelieving husband is set apart [i.e., as an acceptable mate, although not yet saved. See verse 16], through his wife [i.e., her Christian commitment is viewed as having a godly effect on the home], and the unbelieving wife is set apart through the brother [i.e., for the same reason]. Otherwise, your children would be [considered] unclean. [Note: "Unclean" suggests they would be viewed as pagans were it not for one parent being a Christian].

But, as it is, they are set apart as acceptable [i.e., to God, because of the influence of the one Christian parent]. **15)** Yet if the unbelieving mate separates [from his spouse], let him go. The brother or sister is not obligated [to continue the marriage] under such circumstances. For God has called you [believers] to live in peace. **16)** How can you know, [Christian] wife, whether or not you will [be able to] convert your husband? Or how can you know, [Christian] husband, whether or not you will [be able to] convert you wife?

17) Each person should live according to what the Lord has given him and in the state he was when God called him. And this is what I require in all the churches. **18)** Was any man already circumcised when he was called [by God to be a Christian]? Then he should not [try to] become uncircumcised. [Note: Some Jews in that day resorted to a surgical procedure in an attempt to conceal their circumcision]. Was any man uncircumcised when he was called? Then he should not become circumcised. **19)** Being circumcised does not matter [with God], nor does being uncircumcised matter [either]. But observing God's commands is what matters. **20)** Each person should remain in the [same] state he was in when he was called [by God]. **21)** Were you

a slave when you were called? It should not matter to you [i.e., if you still are]. But if, indeed, you can become a free person, then use that freedom instead [i.e., for serving God]. **22)** For the person who was a slave when called by the Lord is [now] the Lord's free person. In the same way, the person who was free when he was called [by the Lord] is [now] Christ's slave. **23)** [Since] you people were bought for a price [i.e., the blood of Christ], do not become slaves to [other] people. **24)** Brothers, each person should remain [in fellowship] with God in the [same] state he was in when he was called [by God to be a Christian].

25) Now I have no command from the Lord concerning [what you wrote about] unmarried women. [Note: The word here is "virgins" but some think it includes both males and females]. But I give my advice as someone who has received the Lord's mercy to be counted trustworthy. **26)** So, because of the impending crisis, I think it is a good thing for a man to remain as he is. **27)** Are you married? [If so], then do not separate [from your mate]. Are you unmarried? [If so], then do not look for a wife. **28)** But if you should marry, you have not sinned. And if a virgin girl marries, she has not sinned. Yet those individuals [who do marry] will have troubles in this life, and I want to spare you of that.

29) But I say this, brothers; there is not much time left [i.e., before the crisis arrives in full fury. See verse 26]. From now on those men who are married should live as though they were single. **30)** Those who cry [should live] as though they were not sad. Those who rejoice [should live] as though they were not happy. Those who buy things [should live] as though they did not own them. **31)** And those who make use of the things of the world [should live] as though they were not [really] involved with them. For the world as we know it is passing away. [Note: The five "as though's" of verses 29-31 are intended to emphasize that Christians should live with eternity in mind and not to become preoccupied with even legitimate earthly circumstances]. **32)** But I want you to be free from worry. The man who is not married is concerned about the affairs of the Lord [and] how to please the Lord. **33)** But the person who is married is [also] concerned about the affairs of the world [and] how to please his wife, **34)** so his interests are divided. However, the unmarried woman [Note: Possibly this refers to a widow, divorcee or non-virgin] and the virgin are concerned about the affairs of the Lord [and] how to be dedicated [to God] in both body and spirit. But the married woman is concerned about the affairs of the world [and] how to please her husband. **35)**

Now I am saying this for your own benefit, not in order to put [unreasonable] restrictions on you, but that you may do whatever is proper and devote yourselves to the Lord's service without distraction.

36) But if any man thinks he is [being tempted to] behave improperly toward his virgin [fiancee], and she is past prime [marriageable] age, and feels the need [to get married], [Note: The Greek says "and so it has to be"], he should do what he wants; they should get married --- that man has not sinned. **37)** But [another] man, who has a conviction in his heart [about the matter], and does not feel it is necessary [to get married], but has control over his will [i.e., his sexual passion], and has made up his mind to keep [from marrying] his own virgin [fiancee]---that man is doing the right thing [also]. **38)** So then, the man who marries his virgin [fiancee] is doing the right thing and the man who does not marry her is doing [even] better.

39) A wife is bound [i.e., to stay married] for as long as her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants; [but it must be] only in the Lord [i.e., he must be a faithful Christian]. **40)** But she will be happier if she remains as she is [i.e., single]. This is my advice and I think that I, too, have God's Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1) I now what to reply to the matter of idolatrous sacrifices [which you wrote to me about]. We know that we all possess knowledge. [Note: This may be a statement posed to Paul by the Corinthians, who seemed quite preoccupied with "knowledge"]. Knowledge [only] makes people arrogant, while love builds them up [spiritually]. **2)** If anyone thinks he knows something, he [really] does not know as much as he ought to. **3)** But if anyone loves God, that person is known by God.

4) Now concerning [the matter of] eating foods [once] offered as sacrifices to idols, we know that an idol is [really] nothing in the world [at all], and that there is only one God. **5)** For [even] if there were things called "gods," whether in heaven or on earth; [and even if] there were many "gods" and many "lords," **6)** yet there is [only] one God to us, [and He is] the Father, from whom all things have come, and for whom we live. And [there is only] one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things have come, and through whom we

live. 7) However, not every person knows this [truth]. For some people have been so used to an idol all this time that they still think of the idol [as a reality] when eating food that has been sacrificed to it. And their weak conscience becomes polluted. [Note: These people cannot seem to shake off the idea that somehow the idol is real, so feel guilty of wrongdoing when eating food sacrificed to it]. 8) But [eating certain] foods will not improve our relationship to God; we are neither any worse off if we do not eat [certain things], nor are we any better off if we do eat them.

9) But pay attention [to this], so that somehow this liberty of yours [i.e., to eat whatever you want to] does not become an occasion over which weak people could fall [away from God]. 10) For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, who have [correct] knowledge [in this matter], eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged to eat food sacrificed to idols? 11) So, this weak brother, for whose sake Christ died, becomes [spiritually] destroyed, [and all] because of your "knowledge." [i.e., you know that such eating is harmless, but your weak brother does not know this, so he is led into sin by your unloving example]. 12) And in this way, when you sin against the brothers by injuring their weak conscience, you are [actually] sinning against Christ. 13) Therefore, if [eating certain] foods causes my brother to fall away [from God], I will never eat meat again, so I do not cause my brother to fall away.

CHAPTER NINE

1) Am I not a free man? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? [See Acts 9:17; I Cor. 15:8]. Are you people not [the result of] my work in [the service of] the Lord? 2) [Even] if I am not [accepted as] an apostle with other people, at least I am with you. For you people are my seal [i.e., proof] of my apostleship in [the service of] the Lord.

3) My defense to those people who [want to] examine my credentials is this: 4) Do we [i.e., Barnabas and I. See verse 6] not have the right to eat and drink [i.e., at the expense of the church]? 5) Do we not have the right to take a Christian [Note: The Greek says, "believing"] wife with us [on our preaching tours], just like the rest of the apostles, and the Lord's brothers do [i.e., James, Joseph, Judas and Simon. Mark 6:3], and Cephas [i.e., Peter]? 6) Or, are Barnabas and I the only ones who must have a [secular] job for our living? 7) What

soldier ever served [in the army] and paid his own expenses? Who [ever] planted a grape orchard and did not get to eat some of the grapes it produced? Or, who [ever] tended a flock of goats and did not get to drink some of the milk? **8)** Do I say these things from a purely human standpoint, or does not the law of Moses also teach the same thing? **9)** For it is written in the law of Moses [Deut. 25:4], "You should not put a muzzle on an ox while it tramples over the grain." Is it the oxen that God is concerned about? **10)** Or, is He not really saying this for our sakes? Yes, it was written for us because the farmer ought to plow in hope [of planting a crop], and the harvester ought to thresh grain in hope of reaping a crop. **11)** If we have planted spiritual seeds [i.e., the Gospel message] among you, is it too much to expect to reap a material harvest from you? **12)** If other people have the right to receive a share of what you have, should we not have even more [right to it]? Yet we did not make use of this right, but instead we put up with whatever we had to so we would not become a hindrance to [the spread of] the good news [about Christ]. **13)** Do you not know that those who perform service in the Temple [are permitted to] eat food from the Temple? And those who serve at the Altar receive a share of what is sacrificed on the Altar? **14)** Even so the Lord directed that those who proclaim the good news [about Christ] should get their living from [preaching] that good news. **15)** But I have not availed myself of any of these rights. And I am not writing this so that it would be done in my case, for I would rather die than have anyone make my boast [i.e., of preaching without financial support] an empty one. **16)** [But] I do not have anything to boast about if I preach the good news because I am compelled to do it. For it would be too bad for me if I did not preach the good news. **17)** For if I preached because [I personally decided] I wanted to, I could claim a reward. But if I did not preach from a personal decision to do so, then it would be because I was entrusted with the task [by God]. **18)** Then what is my reward? It is being able to preach the good news without receiving financial support [for it], so as not to claim my full rights in [the work of preaching] the good news.

19) For although I am free from [being accountable to] all people, I placed myself under obligation to them [as a slave], so as to win as many as possible [to Christ]. **20)** I behaved like a Jew in front of the Jews in order to win Jews [to Christ]. I behaved like a person who was under [obligation to observe] the law [i.e., Jews] in front of

those who observe that law, although I was not [really] under [obligation to] it. I did this to win those who are under [obligation to observe] the law. **21)** I [also] behaved like a person without [obligation to observe] the law [i.e., Gentiles] in front of those who are not obligated to it, although I was not [really] without obligation to God's law; but was under [obligation to] Christ's law. I did this to win those who are without [obligation to observe] the law [i.e., Gentiles]. **22)** I behaved like a weak person in front of weak persons [See 8:9-12], in order to win them over [i.e., to help them become stronger]. I have become all things to all people so that, in every way, I could save some of them. **23)** And everything I do is for the sake of [the work of] the Gospel, so that I may share in its benefits.

24) Do you not know that [although] everyone runs in a race, only one person wins the prize? So, you should run in order to win. **25)** And everyone who [strenuously] competes in athletic events exercises self-control during training. Now they do this to receive a laurel wreath that withers, but we [do it to receive] a lasting crown. **26)** So, I run with a purpose and I fight that way [too]; I do not just shadow box. **27)** But I work out and get my body in shape [i.e., spiritually], so that after preaching to other people, I myself do not become disqualified [i.e., for winning the prize from God. See verse 24].

CHAPTER TEN

1) For I want you to be [fully] aware, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud, and all of them passed [safely] through the [Red] Sea. [Note: This refers to God guiding the Israelites through the desert during the daytime by a cloud moving along above them before they crossed the Jordan River. See Ex. 13:21-22]. **2)** [In doing this] they were all [actually] immersed into [fellowship with] Moses in the cloud and in the sea. **3)** And they all ate the same spiritual food [i.e., the supernatural manna. See Ex. 16:4-5], **4)** and drank the same spiritual drink [i.e., water coming from a rock supernaturally. See Ex. 17:6]. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. [Note: Besides actual water, they were refreshed from the spiritual presence of Christ]. **5)** However, God was not pleased with the vast majority of them, for their bodies were scattered over the desert. [See Num. 14:29ff]. **6)** Now these events were examples for us, so that we should not have

strong desires for evil things like they did. **7)** [So], do not worship idols as some of them did, as it is written [Ex. 32:6], "The people sat down to feast and drink, then got up and played." [Note: This refers to the Israelites engaging in an orgy of dancing and sex. See Ex. 32:17-19]. **8)** Neither should we commit sexual immorality as some of them did, [with] 23,000 people falling dead in one day. [Note: Num. 25:9 mentions 24,000 people slain, but that number could have included the additional people slain by the judges. See Num. 25:5]. **9)** Neither should we put the Lord to a test as some of them did, and were killed by snake bites. [See Num. 21:5ff]. **10)** Neither should you people complain as some of them did and were killed by the destroying angel. [See Ex. 12:23?].

11) Now these events happened to those people as examples [to us], and they were written as warnings to us, to whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. [Note: This refers to past ages concluding with the coming of Christ in that day]. **12)** So, the person who thinks he is standing firm [in the faith] should pay attention [to his life], so that he does not fall [away from God]. **13)** Every temptation that you have experienced is one that commonly happens to people. But God is dependable and will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability [to cope with it]; [instead] He will provide, along with the temptation, also a way of escaping [it], so you people will be able to endure it.

14) Therefore, my dearly loved ones, run away from idol worship. **15)** I am speaking to you as [I would] to sensible people, [so] judge for yourselves what I am saying. **16)** Does not the "cup of blessing," which we bless, signify a fellowship with Christ's [physical] blood? [Note: This was the cup used at the close of the Passover meal and was called this because of the prayer of thanksgiving offered for it. Paul refers to such a prayer in connection with its use in the Lord's Supper]. Does not the bread that we break signify a fellowship with Christ's [physical] body? **17)** Inasmuch as there is one loaf of bread that we all share, we who are many make up one body [of believers].

18) Look at the physical nation of Israel; do not their people [i.e., the priests] who eat the [animal] sacrifices have fellowship [with God] in the Altar [service]? **19)** So, what am I saying? That an animal sacrificed to idols is [really] anything, or that an idol [itself] is anything? **20)** [Certainly not!] But I am saying that the Gentile sacrifices are [really] offered to evil spirits and not to God. And I do not want you to have fellowship with evil spirits. **21)** You cannot drink [both] the cup of the Lord and the cup of evil spirits [i.e., and

still be acceptable to God]. You cannot share in [both] the Lord's table and the table of evil spirits [and still be acceptable to God]. 22) Or, are we [trying to] make the Lord jealous [by doing this]? [Do we think] we are stronger than He is?

23) "Everything is permissible [to do];" but not everything is profitable [See note at 6:12]. "Everything is permissible [to do];" but not everything builds [people] up. 24) No one should look out for his own interests [only], but for the interests of others [as well].

25) Eat whatever is sold in the [public] meat markets, without asking any questions [about it] for [your] conscience' sake. [i.e., do not inquire about the previous use of the food you buy, because you might discover something about it that would make you feel guilty of wrongdoing if you ate it]. 26) For the earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord. 27) Now if an unbeliever invites you for a meal and you decide to go, eat whatever is set in front of you without asking any questions for [your] conscience' sake. [See verse 25]. 28) But if anyone says to you, "This [food] has been offered as a sacrifice [to an idol]," do not eat it, for the sake of the person who pointed this out to you, and for conscience' sake --- 29) that is, for the sake of the other person's conscience, not your own. For why should my freedom [to eat what I want] be judged [as wrong] by another person's conscience? [Note: The questions in this and the following verse may mean, "it is not worth eating questionable things, if doing so would bring criticism from a weak brother"]. 30) If I thank God for what I eat, why should I be criticized for eating something I have [already] thanked Him for?

31) So, whether you people eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to honor God. 32) Do not [do what could] cause Jews, Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] or the church of God to fall [away from God]. 33) For even I myself [try] to please everyone in every way, and not to look out [just] for my own good, but [also] for the good of many people, so that they may be saved.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) You people should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.

2) Now I commend you for remembering me in everything and for remaining loyal to the [inspired] traditions which I have handed on to you.

3) But I want you to know that Christ is the [spiritual] head [i.e., authority] over every man; and the man is the [spiritual] head over the woman [Note: The Greek words for "woman" and "wife" are the same. "Wife" is obviously meant by the context]; and God is the head over Christ. 4) Every man who prays or prophesies [i.e., speaks in a public assembly, since prophecy was always for the benefit of others] with his [physical] head covered [Note: The Greek word here denotes "something hanging down" and could refer to long hair or a cloth shawl], shows disrespect for his head [i.e., Christ]. 5) But every woman who prays or prophesies [in the public assembly] with her [physical] head uncovered [i.e., with hair or a shawl] shows disrespect for her head [i.e., for her husband. See verse 3]. Such appearance is the same as if her [physical] head were shaved. [Note: Various sources point out that a shaved or closely cropped head was an emblem of a prostitute or a woman found guilty of sexual unfaithfulness to her husband. See Num. 5:11-18]. 6) So, if a woman does not cover her [physical] head [i.e., with sufficient hair or a cloth shawl], she might as well cut her hair off. But if it is a shame for a woman to cut her hair off or shave her head [See note on verse 5], then she should have her head covered [i.e., with hair or a shawl]. 7) But a man should certainly not cover his [physical] head [i.e., with "something hanging down," such as long hair or a cloth shawl. See verse 4], since he is the image and glory of God. But the woman [i.e., his wife] is the glory of the man [i.e., her husband]. 8) For man did not come from woman [i.e., Adam was created directly by God], but woman came from man [i.e., she was taken from his side. See Gen. 2:18-23]. 9) And indeed, man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman [was created] for man's sake. 10) This [i.e., the order of creation] is the reason that the woman should have [a symbol of] authority on her [physical] head [i.e., hair or a shawl to indicate subjection to her husband], and because of the angels. [Note: This difficult phrase probably means that angels, who observe the activities of Christian assemblies, are pleased when they see things being done in their proper order]. 11) Nevertheless, in [the fellowship of] the Lord, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. [See Gal. 3:28]. 12) For as the woman was created from man, so also the man is born from the woman. But everything comes from God. 13) [So], judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God [in the assembly] with her [physical] head uncovered [i.e., by hair or a shawl]? 14) [And] does not the very nature of things teach you that it is disgraceful for a man to have long hair? [Note: The prevailing, worldwide custom, observable to Paul even in his day, was shorter hair on men and longer hair on women.]

The fact of exceptions to this arrangement only proves the rule. See Num. 6:5; I Sam. 1:11].

15) But if a woman wears long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given to her for a covering [i.e., in place of the cloth shawl]. **16)** But if anyone is inclined to argue [about this matter], neither we [apostles] nor the churches of God have any [other] custom than this.

17) But in giving you these instructions, I have a criticism to make [about you people]. It is that your assemblies are doing more harm than good. **18)** For first of all, I have been informed [Note: This was probably by Chloe's family. See 1:11] that divisions exist among you people when you assemble as a congregation. And I am inclined to believe it [is true]. **19)** For it is to be expected [i.e., it is inevitable] that there would be dissensions among you, so that those who are approved [by God] can become known among you. **20)** So, when you people assemble together [Note: This was a church meeting at which they also shared a common meal prior to the Lord's Supper], it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper [properly]. **21)** For as you are eating, each one of you partakes of his own supper [ahead of the others], so that one person is [still] hungry while the other gets drunk. **22)** Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or, do you despise the church of God and put to shame those people who do not have anything [to eat]? What should I say to you? Should I commend you for doing this? Certainly not!

23) For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you: On the night the Lord Jesus was turned over [to the Jewish authorities] He took bread, **24)** and after giving thanks [for it], He broke it [in pieces] and said, "This represents my [physical] body, which is [to be given] for you. [Continue to] do this in memory of me." **25)** In the same way [He took] the cup also, after supper, and said, "This cup [i.e., its contents] represents the new Agreement [ratified] by my blood. [Continue to] do this, whenever you people drink from it, in memory of me." **26)** For whenever you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you are proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes [again]. **27)** Therefore, whoever eats the [Lord's] bread or drinks from the Lord's cup in a way that is unworthy [of them. See verse 21], will be guilty of [dishonoring] the body and the blood of the Lord. **28)** So, a person should examine himself [first] and then he should eat the bread and drink from the cup. **29)** For a person who eats and drinks without determining the significance of the body [of Jesus], [i.e., without showing proper reverence for Christ, as represented by the bread and cup (see verse 27), or without

distinguishing this sacred memorial Supper from a common meal], eats and drinks judgment upon himself. [Note: Some apply "the body" in this verse to the church and explain it as a warning against failing to appreciate the unity that the Supper is intended to signify]. **30)** Because of this [i.e., their improper partaking of the Supper], many people among you are weak and ill, and a number have fallen asleep [i.e., died]. [Note: While most commentators view this judgment as physical, there is a distinct possibility that it refers to spiritual sickness and death]. **31)** But if we [had] examined ourselves [properly], we would not be [i.e., not have been] judged [i.e., with sickness and death. See verse 30]. **32)** But since we are being judged, we are [also] being disciplined by the Lord, so that we do not have to be condemned along with the world.

33) So, my brothers, when you assemble for a meal, wait for each other [i.e., so some will not be finished before others. See verse 21]. **34)** If anyone is [too] hungry [i.e., to wait], he should eat at home, so that your assembly does not result in judgment [falling on some of you. See verse 30]. And I will tend to the remaining matters when I come [to you].

CHAPTER TWELVE

1) Now concerning spiritual [i.e., supernatural] gifts, brothers, I want you to be [fully] knowledgeable. **2)** You people know that when you were [still unconverted] Gentiles, you were led astray to [worship] lifeless idols, however you were led [i.e., wherever you turned, you were being led into idolatrous practices]. **3)** Therefore, I am telling you that no one who speaks under the influence of the Holy Spirit of God says, "Jesus is cursed!" And no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

4) Now there are a variety of [spiritual] gifts, but [they are given by] the same Holy Spirit. **5)** And there are a variety of services, but [they are rendered to] the same Lord. **6)** And there are a variety of [Christian] activities, but the same God provides the power for everyone to do all of them [i.e., it is God who empowers every person who has a gift]. **7)** But the evidence of the Holy Spirit's [power] is given to each person for the good of everyone. **8)** For one person is given the [supernatural] message of wisdom through the Holy Spirit; another person is given the [supernatural] message of knowledge by

means of the same Holy Spirit. 9) Still another person is given [supernatural] faith [See 13:2] by the same Holy Spirit; yet another person is given gifts [providing the ability] to perform [supernatural] healings by that one Holy Spirit. 10) Another [is given] the ability to perform miracles; and another [is given] the ability to prophecy [supernaturally]; and another [is given] the ability to speak in different languages [supernaturally]; and still another [is given] the ability to interpret those languages [supernaturally]. 11) Now all of these [supernatural gifts] are the work of one and the same Holy Spirit, who distributes them to each person individually as He desires.

12) For [just] as the human body is one [unit], made up of many parts, and all the many parts make up a single body, so it is with Christ. [Note: Just as a human body is a single unit, and Christ is a single being, so the members of His body, the church, constitute one body. See verses 27-28]. 13) For we were all immersed by means of the one Holy Spirit into one body [i.e., the church], whether [we were] Jews or Greeks [i.e., Gentiles], whether slaves or free people, and were all given the one [and the same] Holy Spirit to drink. [Note: This probably refers to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, given to all immersed believers. See John 7:37-39; Acts 2:38]. 14) For the human body is not made up of [only] one part, but of many parts. 15) If the foot should say, "I am not part of the body because I'm not the hand," that does not mean it is not part of the body [does it?]. 16) And if the ear should say, "I am not part of the body because I am not the eye," that does not mean it is not part of the body [does it?]. 17) If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear? If the whole body were an ear, how could it smell? 18) But the way it is, God has placed each individual part in the human body just as it pleased Him. 19) And if all the parts were one part, how could there be a [whole] body? 20) But the way it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21) And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," or again, the head [cannot say] to the feet, "I do not need you." 22) On the contrary, those parts of the body which seem to be weaker [i.e., delicate organs like the heart, lungs, kidneys, etc.] are necessary [for life]. 23) And those parts of the body which we consider less honorable [i.e., probably female breasts, buttocks, etc.], we clothe with greater honor. [Note: The Greek word for "clothe" here refers to clothing elsewhere in the New Testament]. And our unpresentable parts [i.e., probably sex organs] need to be more presentable [i.e., by being covered up with modest clothing], 24) whereas, our presentable parts [i.e., probably face and hands] do

not need [covering up]. But God has put the body together [in such a way as] to give greater honor to that part which lacked it, **25)** so that there would not be any division in the body [Note: Paul here leaves the analogy of the physical body and makes application to the spiritual body, the church], but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. **26)** So, if one part [i.e., one Christian] suffers, then all the parts [i.e., the other Christians] should suffer with it. Or, if one part is honored, all the [other] parts should rejoice with it.

27) Now you people are the [spiritual] body of Christ and each one of you is an individual part of it. **28)** Now God has placed some [ministries] in the church [as follows]: First apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then [those able to perform] miracles, then gifts [enabling people] to perform [supernatural] healings, [those able] to help the needy, [wise] administrators, [and] those able to speak in different languages. **29)** Are all [ministers in the church] apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all perform miracles? **30)** Do all have gifts [enabling them] to perform [supernatural] healings? Do all speak in languages? Do all interpret [those languages]? **31)** [Obviously not], but you should eagerly desire the more important gifts.

And now I will show you a much better way [i.e., a better way to serve one another in the church than using supernatural gifts]:

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) If I have the ability to speak in the languages of human beings and angels [Note: Perhaps the idea is supernaturally and eloquently], but do not have love [for people], I have become [no more than] a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2)** And if I have the [spiritual] gift of prophecy, and can understand all [of God's] secret purposes, and have all knowledge; and if I have all [the supernatural] faith necessary to relocate mountains [See Matt. 17:20], but do not have love [for people], I am nothing. **3)** And if I donate all my possessions to feed poor people, and if I surrender my body to be burned [Note: This probably refers to becoming a martyr, but some manuscripts read, "that I may be able to boast"], but do not have love [for people], it is no benefit to me.

4) [Note: The following traits should be understood in the context of love for people]. Love is patient [with people], and is kind [to them]; love does not envy [what people are or have]; love does not boast [of being

superior to others], it is not arrogant [in dealing with people]. 5) [Love] does not act improperly [toward people]; it does not insist on having its own way [at the expense of others]; it is not easily irritated [by others]; it does not keep track of the wrongs [done by others]. 6) [Love] is not glad about the evil [that people do], but is glad about the truth [i.e., the good in their lives]. 7) [Love] conceals all [people's] faults; it believes [the best about] all people; it hopes [for the best in] all people; it endures [ill treatment from] all people.

8) Love will never cease. But though there are [now supernatural gifts of] prophecies, [someday] they will be abolished [i.e., such gifts will cease to be exercised]. Though there are [now supernatural gifts of] languages, [someday] they will stop [i.e., such gifts will cease to be exercised]. Though there is [now the supernatural gift of] knowledge, [someday] it will be abolished [i.e., this gift will cease to be exercised]. 9) For [now] we have partial knowledge and partial prophetic messages, 10) but when that which is complete comes [i.e., the full revelation of God's will, contained in the New Testament Scriptures], then the partial will be abolished [i.e., the supernatural gifts, which provided only part of the revealed will of God, will cease to be exercised]. 11) When I was a child I spoke, thought and reasoned like a child. But now that I have become a man, I have put away childish things. [Note: Paul uses an analogy to illustrate that the church made use of the supernatural gifts in its infancy, but that these would no longer be needed when it matured]. 12) For now [i.e., during the church's infant state] we see in a mirror [Note: God's word is elsewhere likened to a mirror. See James 1:22-25] indistinctly [i.e., because of having only partial knowledge and prophecy], but then [i.e., when the church matures and has the completed Scriptures], we will see face to face [i.e., clearly]. Now I have [only] partial knowledge, but then I will have full knowledge, just as [God has] full knowledge of me. 13) But now [i.e., since the temporary gifts are to pass away], these three things remain: faith, hope and love; and the most important of them is love.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1) You should make loving [others] your aim, yet eagerly desire [to possess] spiritual gifts, and especially [the gift of] prophecy. 2) For the person who speaks in a language [supernaturally] does not speak to people, but to God, for no one can

understand him [i.e., unless there is an interpreter or it is the person's native language]; he speaks [previously] unrevealed truths under the influence of the Holy Spirit [or "in his spirit"]. [Note: For a correct understanding of this chapter, it must be kept in mind that Paul is addressing a *misuse* of the gift of speaking in languages supernaturally. The Corinthians were doing this in the wrong way and for the wrong purpose]. **3)** But the person who prophesies speaks [God's message] to people to build them up [spiritually], encourage them and comfort them. **4)** The person who speaks in a language [supernaturally], builds up [only] himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. **5)** Now I would like all of you to speak in languages [supernaturally], but I would rather have you prophecy. For the person who prophesies is more important [i.e., to the church] than those who speak in languages [supernaturally], unless that person interprets [the languages], so the church can be built up [spiritually].

6) But now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in languages [supernaturally], how will I benefit you unless my speaking consists of a revelation [from God], or a [message of] knowledge [See 12:8], or a prophecy, or a teaching? [i.e., the message must be intelligible to be beneficial]. **7)** [This is true] even of inanimate objects which make sounds, such as a flute or harp. If they do not make distinguishable sounds, how will anyone know what tune [or signal] is being played? **8)** For if the trumpet gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for a battle? **9)** So, unless you people also speak clearly with your tongue, how will your speaking be understood? For it will be like you were speaking into the air. **10)** There are, no doubt, many kinds of sounds [i.e., languages] in the world, and none of them is meaningless. **11)** So, if I do not know the meaning of the sound [i.e., language], I will [appear] as a foreigner to the person speaking [that language to me]. And the person speaking [to me] will [appear] as a foreigner to me. **12)** So, you people also, since you are eager for [supernatural] spiritual gifts, should look for ways to excel in building up the church.

13) Therefore, the person who speaks in a language [supernaturally] should pray [i.e., in advance] for the ability to interpret it [as well]. **14)** For if I pray in a language [supernaturally], [it is] my spirit that is praying, but my mind does not understand [what I am saying]. [Note: Here Paul raises an objection to the use of a language without the person knowing what he is saying]. **15)** What should I do then? I will

pray with my spirit [i.e. from within], and I will pray with my understanding also [i.e., with a knowledge of what I am saying]. I will sing with my spirit, and I will sing with my understanding also.

16) For if you [ask God to] bless with your spirit [i.e., in a language supernaturally], how will the person there, who does not have the gift [i.e., of interpreting the language] be able to say, "May it be so," when you offer [a prayer of] thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? **17)** For [though] you truly offer thanksgiving acceptably, the other person is not built up.

18) I thank God that I speak in languages [i.e., supernaturally] more than all of you. **19)** However, in the assembly I would rather speak five words with my understanding, so that I can instruct other people also, than to speak ten thousand words in a language [that people do not understand].

20) Brothers, do not be children in the way you think, but be babies in wrongdoing; yet be mature in your thinking. **21)** It is written in the law [Isa. 28:11f], "I [i.e., God] will speak to these people [i.e., the Israelites] by men with foreign languages and through the lips of strangers, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord."

22) Therefore, languages [i.e., spoken supernaturally] are for a [miraculous] sign to unbelievers, not to believers. But prophesying is for a [miraculous] sign to believers, not to unbelievers. **23)** Therefore, if the whole church assembles together and everyone speaks in languages [i.e., supernaturally], and outsiders [i.e., people who do not understand the language being spoken] or unbelievers come [into the assembly], will they not say that you people are crazy? **24)** But if everyone prophesies and someone comes [into the assembly] who is an outsider or an unbeliever, he will be convicted [of his sins] by everyone [i.e., who speaks the message in an intelligible language], and judged by everyone. **25)** The secrets of his heart will be revealed so that he will fall [to the ground] on his face and worship God, declaring that God is truly among you.

26) So, what is the conclusion, brothers? When you people assemble together, each one of you has a psalm [to sing], or a lesson [to teach], or a [supernatural] revelation [to give], or a language [to speak supernaturally], or an interpretation [of that language]. Everything that is done should be for the building up [of the church]. **27)** If any person speaks in a language [supernaturally], there should be [only] two, or at most three people [doing it in one meeting], and

they should take turns. And [only] one person should interpret [the language spoken]. **28)** But if there is no interpreter present [at the meeting], the person [i.e., with the ability to speak a language supernaturally] should remain quiet in the assembly. [Note: This implies that the speaker would know before he begins speaking whether or not an interpreter is present]. [In that case], he should speak [only] to himself and to God. [See verse 2].

29) And [only] two or three prophets should speak [in one meeting], and [then] other people should determine the significance [of their messages]. **30)** But if something is revealed [supernaturally, at about the same time] to another person sitting nearby, the first one should finish speaking [i.e., before the second one begins]. **31)** For all of you [i.e., who have the gifts], can prophesy, one at a time, so that all of you may learn and be encouraged. **32)** And the prophets' spirits are [to be] under the prophets' control [i.e., a prophet was to determine if or when he exercised his gift], **33)** because God is not a God of disorder but of peace [i.e., harmony].

As is the practice in all of the churches of the saints [i.e., God's holy people], **34)** the women should remain quiet in the assemblies. For they are not permitted to speak [i.e., in a language supernaturally, or to prophesy], but they are to be in subjection [i.e., to male leaders. See I Tim. 2:11-12], as the law also says. [See Gen. 3:16?]. **35)** And if they want to find out about something, they should ask their own husbands at home [i.e., instead of asking someone else in the assembly and thereby suggesting insubordination to their husbands]. For it is a shame for a woman to speak in the assembly. [See verse 34]. **36)** Did the message of God originate from you [i.e., the church in Corinth]? Or, were you people the only ones who received it?

37) If any man thinks he is a prophet or has a spiritual gift, he should realize that the things I am writing to you are the Lord's commandment. **38)** But if any man does not know this, he should remain ignorant. [Note: The Greek may mean, "If any man does not recognize this (truth), he will not be recognized (in the judgment)"].

39) Therefore, my brothers, desire eagerly to prophesy and [yet] do not prohibit people from speaking in a language [supernaturally]. **40)** But everything [in the assembly] should be done properly and orderly.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1) Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the good news which I preached to you. You received it; you are standing firm in it; 2) [and] you have been saved by it also, if you hold on to it firmly [i.e., continue believing and practicing it]. For if you do not [hold on to it firmly], you will have believed [it] all for nothing.

3) For I passed on to you the [following] main principles that I received [i.e., by revelation]: Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; 4) He was buried; He was raised [from the dead] on the third day, according to the Scriptures; 5) and He appeared to Cephas [i.e., Peter. See Luke 24:34], and then to the twelve apostles. [See Luke 24:33]. 6) After that He appeared to over five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, but some have died. 7) Then He appeared to James [Note: This was probably Jesus' half-brother. See Acts 12:17; Gal. 1:19], and then to all of the apostles. [See John 20:26]. 8) Then last of all, He appeared to me also, as someone born abnormally. [Note: This probably refers to Paul being converted later than the rest of the apostles]. 9) For I am the least [significant] of the apostles, and am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10) But I am whatever I am because of God's unearned favor, and the favor He showed me was not for nothing [i.e., Paul made the most of his conversion by being extra diligent in his service to God]. But I worked harder than all the other apostles, yet it was not I, but God's favor on me [that accomplished it]. 11) So, whether it was I, or the other apostles [who did the work], this is [the message] that we have preached, and that you people have received.

12) Now if it is preached that Christ was raised from the dead, how can some people among you say that people will not be raised from the dead? 13) But if there is no resurrection from the dead, [then] Christ has not been raised up either. 14) And if Christ has not been raised up, then our preaching is for nothing, and your faith is for nothing too. 15) And also, we are found to be false witnesses about God because we testified that God raised up Christ [from the dead], when [in reality] He did not raise Him up if, in fact, the dead are not raised up. 16) For if dead people are not raised up, [then] neither has Christ been raised. 17) And if Christ has not been raised up, [then] your faith is for nothing; you are still condemned by your

sins. **18)** Then [also], those who have died in [fellowship with] Christ are lost. **19)** If we have placed our hope in Christ while in this life only, we are to be pitied more than all [other] people.

20) But now Christ has been raised up from the dead; [He is] the firstfruits of those who have died. [Note: By "firstfruits" is meant the first installment of the crop which promises the entire harvest eventually]. **21)** For since death happened to a man [i.e., Adam], the resurrection from the dead also happened to a man [i.e., Christ]. **22)** For as all people die [physically] in [their relationship to] Adam, so also will all people be made alive [physically] in [their relationship to] Christ. [Note: However, some view "made alive" as referring to the new spiritual life given to believers]. **23)** But each one [is raised up] in his own turn: Christ as the firstfruits [See verse 20]; then those who are Christ's [i.e., believers], when He returns. **24)** Then [i.e., at Christ's return] the end [of the world] will occur, when He will turn over the kingdom to God, the Father, after He has abolished all [hostile] dominion, authority and power. **25)** For Christ must [continue to] rule [over His kingdom, the church] until God has put all of His enemies under Christ's feet. **26)** The last enemy that will be abolished is death. **27)** For He [i.e., God] placed everything in subjection under His [i.e., Christ's] feet. But when God said, "Everything is in subjection [to Him]," it is clear that this did not include God [Himself], who placed everything in subjection to Him [i.e., Christ]. **28)** And after everything [else] has been subjected to Christ, then the Son Himself will also be subjected [i.e., He will subject Himself] to God, who subjected everything to Christ, so that God may rule over everything.

29) Otherwise [i.e., if there were no resurrection], what do people accomplish by being immersed for those who have [already] died? If dead people are not raised up at all, why then are people immersed on their behalf? [Note: The foregoing rendition is the most commonly held one of over 30 interpretations given to this very difficult verse. Other possibilities are: a) "immersed in view of (being raised from) the dead," b) "immersed in view of being dead (to sin)," c) "immersed in view of (having to suffer) death," d) "immersed in view of (someday joining) the dead"]. **30)** Why do we also risk danger every hour [i.e., if there were no resurrection]? **31)** I face death every day, I assure you brothers, as surely as I boast of [fellowship with] you in Christ Jesus our Lord. **32)** What benefit was it to me, from a human standpoint, if I fought wild animals in Ephesus, and [yet] the dead are not raised? [Note: This probably refers to Paul facing ferocious opposition from people there in Ephesus]. We should [just] eat and drink, for tomorrow we [may] die. **33)** Do

not be fooled; bad company ruins good moral behavior. **34)** Come to your senses; do what is right and stop sinning. Some of you do not know God [i.e., in a personal way]. I am saying this to make you ashamed.

35) But someone will ask, "How are dead people raised up?" and "What kind of a body will they have?" **36)** You foolish person. The seed you plant does not come to life [i.e., grow] unless it dies. **37)** And what you yourself sow is not the plant that will [eventually] come up, but simply a seed. It may be a grain of wheat or something else. **38)** But God gives it the [kind of] body He wants [it to have], so each seed gets its own plant. **39)** All flesh is not the same [Note: The word "flesh" here refers to the material composition of matter, and in no way suggests anything sinful, as it does in many other places in Paul's writings]. But mankind has one [kind of] flesh; animals have another kind; birds have another; and fish [still] another. **40)** Also, there are heavenly bodies [i.e., stars and planets] and earthly bodies [i.e., men and animals]. But the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one [kind], and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another [kind]. **41)** The sun has one [kind] of splendor, and the moon has another [kind], and the stars [still] another. For [even] one star's splendor is different from another's. **42)** It is the same way with the resurrection of dead people. [A person's body] is buried [only] to decay; it is raised up never to decay again. **43)** It is buried in dishonor; it is raised up in splendor. It is buried in weakness; it is raised up in power. **44)** It is buried as a physical body; it is raised up as a spiritual body. If there is [such a thing as] a physical body, [then] there is also a spiritual body. **45)** So, it is also written [Gen. 2:7], "The first man, Adam, became a living being." The last Adam [i.e., Christ], became the Spirit who gives [never ending] life. [See John 5:21]. **46)** However, the spiritual [body] does not come first, but the physical [body does]; then the spiritual [body comes]. **47)** The first man [i.e., Adam] came from the dust of the ground [See Gen. 2:7]; the second man [i.e., Christ] came from heaven. **48)** Just as earthly people are like the man who came from dust; so heavenly people are like the man who came from heaven. **49)** And just as we [now] appear [in both a physical and spiritual body] like the man who came from dust [i.e., Adam]; we will also [someday] appear [in both a physical(?) and spiritual body] like the man who came from heaven [i.e., Christ].

50) Now this is what I am saying, brothers; flesh and blood

[i.e., physical bodies] cannot possess the kingdom of God [i.e., the heavenly realm]; neither can [bodies that] decay possess [a place] which does not decay. **51)** Look, I am telling you a secret truth: We will not all die, but we will all be changed [i.e., physically and spiritually] **52)** in a split second, as quickly as the twinkle of an eye, when the last trumpet blows. For the trumpet will blow and dead people [i.e., believers] will be raised up, never to decay again, and [the living] will be changed [i.e., physically and spiritually]. **53)** For this [body] that can decay must be clothed with [a body] which cannot decay. And this [body] that can die must be clothed with [a body] which cannot die. **54)** But when this [body] that can decay has been clothed with one which cannot decay, and this [body] that can die has been clothed with one which cannot die, then the Scriptural saying will be fulfilled [Isa. 25:8], "Death has been swallowed up [i.e., eliminated] by victory." [Note: The reference here is to the time when believers will experience victory over death by being resurrected or taken directly to be with God]. **55)** [Hos. 13:14 says], "Death, where is your victory [over people]? Death, where is your [harmful] sting?" **56)** The [harmful] sting that causes [physical] death is sin [See Rom. 5:12]; and the power of sin [to do this] comes from the law. [See Rom. 8:2]. **57)** But I thank God for giving us victory [i.e., over sin and death] through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58) Therefore, my dearly loved brothers, stand firm [in the faith]; do not be moved [from your commitment]. Always do your best to work for the Lord, since you know that your labor in the Lord's [service] is not for nothing.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1) Now concerning the collection for the [needy] saints [whom you wrote me about]: You people also should do what I directed the churches in Galatia to do. **2)** On every first day of the week [i.e., at the regular Sunday assembly] each one of you should set aside and store up [money] in proportion to your income, so that no collections will have to be taken when I come. **3)** Then when I arrive, I will send letters with the men you appoint to take the gift to Jerusalem. **4)** And if it seems suitable for me to go also, they can go with me.

5) But I will come to you after I have gone through

Macedonia, for I am planning to go through Macedonia [Note: This was the Roman province of northern Greece]. 6) And perhaps I will stay with you, even for the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. 7) But I do not plan to see you yet, as I will [only] be passing through. For I am hoping to stay with you for some time [i.e., in the future], if the Lord permits. 8) But I will wait [here] in Ephesus until the Day of Pentecost [Note: This was an annual Jewish festival, held at spring harvest time]; 9) because a great door [of opportunity] has opened up to me [here] for doing an effective work [for God], but there are [also] many enemies who oppose me. [See Acts 19].

10) Now if [or, "probably", when] Timothy comes [i.e., there to Corinth], make sure he feels at ease [Note: Due to his youthful age and inexperience, Timothy was probably inclined to be easily intimidated], for he is doing the Lord's work, just as I am. 11) So, do not let anyone look down on him, but help him on his journey in peace so that he can come to me, for I am expecting him [to come] with the brothers.

12) Now concerning our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the other brothers, but he was not at all willing to do so at this time. But he will go when he has the opportunity.

13) You people should be alert; stand firm in the faith; act like [godly] men; be [spiritually] strong. 14) Everything you do should be done lovingly.

15) You know that [members of] the family of Stephanas are the firstfruits of Achaia [i.e., the first converts in that province of southern Greece], and that they have committed themselves to serving God's people [i.e., the saints]. 16) Now I urge you, brothers, that you should also submit to [the leadership of] such people and to everyone [else] who works and labors [with them]. 17) And I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived [here in Ephesus], for they have provided [me] with what you were not able to. 18) For they cheered me up, as they have cheered [or, will cheer] you up [also]. [Note: How these three men did this for Paul and the Corinthians is not known]. You should give recognition to such men.

19) The churches in Asia send you their greetings [Note: This was the westernmost province in present-day Turkey]. Aquila and Prisca [Note: This married couple were close friends and fellow-tentmakers of Paul], along with the church that meets in their house, send you their warm greetings in [fellowship with] Christ. 20) All of the brothers [and sisters] send you their greetings [also]. Greet one another with a holy kiss [i.e., to signify

affection, yet without sensuality].

21) These greetings are being written with my own hand. [See II Thess. 3:17].

22) If anyone [there] does not love the Lord, he deserves to be cut off from God. O Lord, come [back soon]. **23)** May the unearned favor of the Lord Jesus Christ [continue to] be with you. **24)** [I send] my love to all of you in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus. May it be so.

II CORINTHIANS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and Timothy, our brother. [It is being sent] to the church of God at Corinth, with all the saints [i.e., God's holy people] who are in the entire province of Achaia [Note: This was the southern province of Greece].

2) May [God's] unearned favor be yours, [along with] peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3) May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Father of compassionate feelings and the God of all comfort, be praised. 4) He comforts us in all our troubles so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any [kind of] trouble, through the comfort we ourselves have received from Him. 5) For just as we experience an overflow of Christ's sufferings, even so we also experience an overflow of comfort through Christ. 6) But if we experience trouble, it is in order [to provide] for your comfort and salvation. Or, if we are comforted, it is in order [to provide] for your comfort [also], which enables you to endure patiently the same sufferings we experience. 7) And our hope for you is firm, for we know that just as you share our sufferings, so you will also [share] our comfort.

8) For we want you to know, brothers, about the trouble that we experienced in Asia. [See I Cor. 16:19]. We were under a heavy burden [which was] more than we could stand, even to the point of despairing of life. 9) Actually, we felt within us that we had [already] received a death sentence, so that we could [learn] not to trust in ourselves but in God, who raises the dead. 10) He has rescued us from a serious threat of death and He will do it again. We have placed our hope in Him, that He will also continue to rescue us, 11) as you cooperate by praying for us. Then, many people will give thanks [to God] on our behalf for the gift He has given to us through [your] many [prayers].

12) For this is what we boast of: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you, in holiness and godly sincerity, not with human wisdom, but with the favor of God. 13) For we are not writing anything to you than what

you can read and understand. And I hope that, on the day of our Lord Jesus [i.e., the judgment day], you will understand us fully, **14)** as you have understood us partially [or "only a part of you have understood us"], that we are [the occasion of] your boasting, even as you are [the occasion of] our boasting.

15) And because of this confidence [i.e., that you people have such a favorable opinion of me], I had determined to visit you first [i.e., before going to Macedonia. See I Cor. 16:5-7], so that you could have an additional blessing. [Note: The "blessing" here would be Paul getting to minister to them both before and after visiting Macedonia]. **16)** [I had planned] to visit you on my way to Macedonia and then again on my way back from there, and to have you help me on my journey to Judea. [See I Cor. 16:6]. **17)** So, when I made this decision, was I just vacillating [in uncertainty]? Or, do I make plans in a worldly way [i.e., just to suit my own fancy], so that my "yes" and "no" [do not really mean anything]? **18)** But just as certainly as God is dependable, our message to you is not [both] "yes" and "no" [at the same time]. **19)** For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was proclaimed among you by me, [and] Silvanus [i.e., the same as Silas] and Timothy, was not "yes" and "no" [i.e., both our message and Jesus Himself were not contradictory], but with Him, it was "yes" [i.e., Jesus consistently spoke the truth]. **20)** For [no matter] how many promises God has made, in Christ [the answer] is "yes" [i.e., Christ has fulfilled all of God's promises to mankind]. Also, through Christ, the "amen" [Note: This word is always translated elsewhere as "May it be so"] can be said by us in order to honor God. **21)** Now God is the One who makes us stand firm with you in [fellowship with] Christ. He has anointed us [Note: "Anointed" here probably refers to selecting, appointing and commissioning people for some form of Christian service. See Luke 4:18]; **22)** He has placed His seal of ownership upon us by giving us the down payment of the Holy Spirit [to live] in our hearts.

23) But I appeal to God as my witness [i.e., to verify that I am telling the truth]; it was in order to spare you [i.e., from a disciplinary action] that I decided not to return to Corinth. **24)** For we do not have [the right to] rule over your faith [i.e., to dictate concerning your personal relationship with God], but we want to work with you for your happiness. For you are [already] standing firm in your faith. [Note: This whole narrative alludes to some unresolved problems still existing there in Corinth].

CHAPTER TWO

1) So, I decided for myself not to make another painful visit to you. 2) For if I caused you sorrow, who can make me glad except the one I have grieved? [See verse 6]. 3) And I wrote you this very thing so that when I did come I might not be grieved by those who should make me happy. I had confidence in all of you, that whatever makes me happy [also] makes you happy. 4) For I wrote to you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not in order to grieve you, but that you people might know how very much I love you.

5) But if anyone has caused grief, he has not done it to me [only], but to nearly all of you [or, "only partially to all of you"] for I do not want to overstate the case. 6) The punishment inflicted [on him] by the majority of you was sufficient. [Note: If this is a reference to the incestuous man of I Cor. 5:4ff, then the punishment was removing him from their fellowship]. 7) So instead, you people should [now] forgive and comfort him, in order that such a person does not become overwhelmed with extreme grief. 8) So, I urge you to reassure him of your love for him. 9) For this also was my purpose in writing you, that I might test your willingness to obey everything [I required of you]. 10) Now whomever you forgive [for doing] anything [wrong], I will forgive also. For indeed, whatever I have forgiven, if I have [actually] forgiven anything, has been for your sakes in the sight of Christ. [Note: Paul seems to be saying "Since my forgiveness depends on your forgiveness of the man, I am not sure of my forgiveness because I am not sure of yours"]. 11) [I do this] so that Satan cannot take advantage of us, for we are not unaware of his schemes.

12) Now when I came to Troas [See Acts 16:8], in order to preach the good news about Christ, and when a door [of opportunity] was opened to me in [the service of] the Lord [there], 13) I had no peace of mind because I did not find my brother Titus [there]. So, I said "good-bye" to them and went on to Macedonia.

14) But I offer thanks to God, who always leads us [preachers] to victory in [the service of] Christ, and through us makes known the "fragrant odor" of His knowledge everywhere. 15) For we [i.e., through our preaching] are like a fragrant incense which goes up to God, [and spreads the knowledge] of Christ among both saved and lost people. 16) To lost people [we become] a smell of death [i.e., we

bring condemnation to people who reject our message]; to saved people [we become] a fragrance of life [i.e., we bring salvation to people who accept our message]. And who is adequate to [accomplish] such tasks? 17) For we [apostles] are not like so many people, who "peddle" God's message merely for profit [or, "who corrupt God's message"], but in Christ's [service] we proclaim the message from God with sincerity, [realizing we are] in the presence of God.

CHAPTER THREE

1) Are we beginning to commend ourselves again [i.e., by saying that we are not like other people]? Or, do we need letters of recommendation to you or from you, as others do? 2) You people are our letters [of recommendation], written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. 3) You people show [i.e., by your conversions] that you are a letter from Christ, delivered by us [i.e., the result of our ministry], not written with ink but with the Holy Spirit of the living God; not on stone tablets [i.e., as in the case with Moses' ministry], but on tablets of the human heart. [See Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10]. 4) [We say this] because we have such confidence in God through [our relationship with] Christ. 5) It is not that we are [so] competent as to consider anything [we do] as coming from ourselves, but our competence comes from God. 6) He has also made us competent as ministers of a New Agreement [i.e., between Himself and mankind]. It is not [an agreement] based [merely] on a written document [i.e., such as the law of Moses], but on the Holy Spirit, for the written document brings [spiritual] death [See Rom. 8:2], but the Holy Spirit brings [never ending] life.

7) But if the ministry [of the law] that brings [spiritual] death, being carved in letters on stones, came with [such] splendor that the Israelites could not look at Moses' face because of its radiance [See Ex. 34:29-35], (even though such radiance [eventually] faded away), 8) will not the ministry of the Holy Spirit [i.e., the New Agreement] have [greater] splendor? 9) For if the ministry [of the law] that brings condemnation came with splendor, will not the ministry that brings righteousness [i.e., the New Agreement] have greater splendor? 10) For truly, what once came with splendor [i.e., the Old Agreement] has now lost it in comparison to that which has surpassing splendor [i.e.,

the New Agreement]. **11)** For if that which was fading away [i.e., the Old Agreement, represented by the law of Moses] had splendor, how much greater is the splendor of that which remains [i.e., the New Agreement represented by the Gospel]? [Note: In this section Paul uses the analogy of the fading splendor on Moses' face to the fading splendor of the Old Agreement].

12) Therefore, since we have such a hope [i.e., that the Gospel is much superior to the law], we speak with great boldness, **13)** and are not like Moses, who had to put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from staring at it as [its] radiance was completely fading away. [Note: The analogy continues by suggesting that the Old Agreement was fading away like the splendor on Moses' face did]. **14)** But the minds of the Israelites became dull for, to this very day, the same veil remains on them [i.e., figuratively] when the Old Agreement [Scriptures] are read. It is not being revealed to them that the Old Agreement is being abolished by Christ [i.e., by His death on the cross. See Col. 2:14]. **15)** But to this day, a veil remains on their minds whenever [the writings of] Moses are read. **16)** But whenever a person [i.e., the Jews] turn to the Lord, the veil is removed [i.e., so they can understand the meaning of God's promises to them through Christ]. **17)** Now the Lord [i.e., Christ] is the Holy Spirit, and there is freedom [from the bondage of sin and fear] wherever the Spirit of the Lord is. **18)** But all of us [Christians], with unveiled faces, see the Lord's splendor reflected, as [though we were] looking in a mirror, and [so] are being transformed into His likeness in ever-increasing splendor. This is [the work] of the Lord, [who is] the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER FOUR

1) So, having obtained this ministry through [God's] mercy, we do not become discouraged. **2)** Instead, we have renounced [the practice of] secret, disgraceful behavior. We do not practice deception, nor resort to distorting God's message. But, by making known the truth [i.e., the true message], we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the presence of God. **3)** For even if our Gospel message is veiled, it is veiled [only] from those who are lost. **4)** For the god of this world [i.e., Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that they would not see the light of the Gospel of the splendor of Christ, who is the image of God. **5)** For we do not preach ourselves, but [we preach] Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your

slaves for Jesus' sake. **6)** For God, who said [Gen. 1:3], "Light will shine out of darkness," has [also] shone in our hearts to provide [us with] the light of the knowledge of God's splendor [as it shines] on the face of Christ. [Note: This allusion to "splendor shining on Christ's face" may be a continuation of the analogy used in 3:13].

7) But we have this treasure [i.e., the Gospel message] in clay pots [i.e., the mortal bodies of the apostles] to show that the [i.e., its] extraordinary power comes from God and not from us. **8)** We are afflicted in every way, but are not crushed; [we are] perplexed, but not to the point of despair; **9)** [we are] persecuted, but are not deserted [by God]; [we are] struck down, but are not destroyed. **10)** We always carry around in our [physical] bodies the [threat of] dying, as Jesus did [i.e., the apostles were constantly exposed to impending danger and death], so that the life of Jesus [i.e., His virtue, courage, faithfulness, etc.] may be demonstrated in our bodies [i.e., in the way we live] also. **11)** For while we live, we are always exposed to death for Jesus' sake [See Rom. 8:36], so that the life of Jesus may be demonstrated in our mortal bodies [i.e., in our weak and frail human nature]. **12)** So then, [the possibility of physical] death is at work in us, while [spiritual] life is at work in you.

13) But, we have the same spirit [i.e., type] of faith as that written about [Psa. 116:10], "I believed [God's message], so I spoke." We also believe [it], and so we also speak [about it]. **14)** We know that God, who raised up the Lord Jesus [from the dead], will also raise us [apostles] up with Jesus and present us with you people [i.e., in the presence of the Father in heaven]. **15)** For everything [i.e., that we have experienced. See verses 8-12] is for your sakes so that [God's] unearned favor, being extended to so many, [in bringing them salvation through Paul's ministry] may result in much thanksgiving in praise to God.

16) Therefore, we do not get discouraged, for though our physical body is decaying, yet our inner person is being renewed daily. **17)** For our insignificant troubles [here on earth], which last only a short time, are producing for us an immeasurable, never ending [counter-] weight of splendor [i.e., in heaven. See Rom. 8:18]. **18)** So, we do not look at the things which can be seen, but at what cannot be seen, for the things which can be seen are [only] temporary, but the things which cannot be seen are never ending.

CHAPTER FIVE

1) For we know that if our earthly "house" [i.e., our physical body] which is like a tent, is torn down, we have [the promise of] a building from God, a never ending "house" in heaven that is not made by human hands. 2) For indeed, we groan while in this "house," longing to be covered over by our heavenly dwelling place, 3) because when we are covered by it, we will not be found naked [i.e., without a suitable dwelling for our body]. 4) For indeed, we who are in this "tent" groan under its burden, not [wanting] to be uncovered, but to be covered over. Then our mortal body will be swallowed up [i.e., replaced] by [never ending] life. 5) Now God is the One who has prepared us for this very thing [i.e., the receiving of a new body to live in]. He has [also] given us the Holy Spirit as a down payment. [Note: This refers to the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit as being a guarantee that we will receive the balance of our inheritance in the form of a new body].

6) So, we are always encouraged and know that, while we are at home in our [physical] body, we are away from the Lord, 7) for we live by faith, not by what we see. 8) We are encouraged, I say, and would rather be away from our body and at home with the Lord. 9) So, we are also eager to please God very much, whether we are at home [in our body] or away from it. 10) For we must all appear in front of the judgment bar of Christ, so that each one of us may receive what is due him for what he had done while in his [physical] body [i.e., on earth], whether it be good or bad.

11) Since we [apostles] know [what it means] to revere the Lord, we try to persuade people [i.e., to accept the Gospel, or to acknowledge our integrity]. But we are [already] known to God, and I hope that you also know us in your hearts [i.e., to have integrity]. 12) We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but we speak [in such a way as] to give you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you can have an answer for those who take pride in [outward] appearances instead of what is in the heart. 13) For if we [seem to] be crazy, it is for the sake [of the work] of God, or if we [seem to] be sensible, it is for your benefit. 14) For Christ's love for us motivates us, because we have concluded that, [since] one person [i.e., Christ] died for all people, so then all people have died. [Note: This may mean simply that Christ died for all people, who were dead in their sins]. 15) And Christ died for all people, so that those who are alive should not live for

themselves anymore, but for Him who died and rose again for their sakes.

16) So, from now on we will not regard any person by worldly standards, even though we [once] regarded Christ that way. But we will not regard Him [that way] anymore. [Note: Paul seems to be saying that before his conversion he viewed Christ on the basis of His family, His education, His position, etc., but since his conversion he does not view Him that way anymore]. **17)** Therefore, if any person is in [fellowship with] Christ, he is a new person. His old ways have passed away; now his ways have become new. **18)** All [these] things are from God, who restored us to fellowship with Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of restoring [other] people to [such] fellowship. **19)** That is, God was in Christ restoring the world to fellowship with Himself, not counting people's sins against them. And He entrusted to us the message of restoring people to fellowship [with Him].

20) So, we [apostles] are ambassadors, [speaking] on behalf of Christ. [It is] as though God were appealing [to people] through us: "We urge you people, on behalf of Christ, to be restored to fellowship with God." **21)** God considered Christ to be sinful on our behalf, even though He never sinned, so that we could be considered right with God through Him.

CHAPTER SIX

1) As workers together with God we urge you also, who have received God's unearned favor, do not allow it to be for nothing, **2)** for God said [Isa. 49:8], "I listened to you at the right time [i.e., when you needed my favor], and I helped you on the day of your salvation." Look, now is the right time [to accept God's favor]; now is the day of salvation.

3) [We try] not to place an obstacle in anyone's way [i.e., to keep them from accepting the Gospel message], so that our ministry would not be blamed. **4)** But, as ministers of God, we [try to] commend ourselves [to others] in every way. [We do this] by [our] great steadfastness in troubles, hardships and difficulties. **5)** [We have been] beaten, jailed, and mobbed. [We have] worked hard, missed sleep and gone without food. **6)** [We have ministered] with purity, knowledge, patience and kindness. [We have done this] by [the power of] the Holy Spirit; out of genuine love; **7)** by preaching the truth;

through the power of God [i.e., possibly including miracles]; and by [using] weapons of righteousness in [our] right and left hands. [Note: This could allude to offensive and defensive weapons and means that Paul was fully equipped to do whatever was right]. **8)** [We have experienced] honor and dishonor; a bad reputation and a good one. [We have been viewed] as deceivers and yet are genuine; **9)** as [both] unknown [to people] and yet well-known; [we have almost] died, and yet as you see, we are still alive; [we have been] punished and yet not killed; **10)** sad and yet always joyous; poor and yet making many people [spiritually] rich; destitute and yet possessing everything.

11) We have spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, and our hearts have been wide open to you. **12)** We are not holding back [our affections] from you, but you are holding back your affections [from us]. **13)** I am speaking to you as my [spiritual] children; open up [your hearts] to me in return.

14) Do not team up with unbelievers [i.e., in close relationships, such as marriage, etc.]. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or, what fellowship can light have with darkness? **15)** And what harmony can Christ have with Belial? [Note: "Belial" means "worthlessness" and was used for referring to the devil]. Or, what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? **16)** And what agreement is there between a temple of God and idols? For we are a temple of the living God, just as God said [Lev. 26:12], "I will live in them and walk among them [i.e., among His people]; and I will be their God and they will be my people." **17)** Therefore, the Lord says [Isa. 52:11], "You people should leave their company [i.e., unbelievers, verse 14] and separate yourselves from them, and do not touch anything unclean [i.e., their evil practices], and I will welcome you." **18)** The Lord Almighty [also] said [Hos. 1:10], "I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to me."

CHAPTER SEVEN

1) [So], since we have these promises [See 6:16-18], dear ones, we should purify ourselves from everything that pollutes [our] body and spirit while living lives completely separated [from sin], out of reverence for God.

2) [Note: The following section seems to pick up where 6:13 left off]. Make room for us in your hearts. We have not wronged or injured anyone,

nor have we taken advantage of anyone. 3) I am not saying this to condemn you, for [as] I said before, you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. 4) I have great confidence in talking to you; I have great pride in you and I am full of encouragement [over you]. In all of our troubles I am overflowing with joy.

5) For even when we came to Macedonia we had no rest for our bodies. But we met with trouble on every hand. [There were] conflicts on the outside and fears within us. 6) But God, who comforts downhearted people, comforted us [also] by the arrival of Titus. 7) [We were comforted] not only by his presence, but also [by learning] that you comforted him. He [also] told us of your longing and grieving and concern for me, so that made me all the happier. 8) For even though I caused you sorrow by my letter [Note: Paul's writing of I Corinthians to correct abuses at Corinth apparently produced sorrow for their wrongdoing], I do not regret it, though I did regret it. [For] I see that my letter hurt you, though only for a short time. 9) Now I am glad, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repent. For you were made sorry from a godly motive, so were not harmed by us in any way. 10) For the sorrow that God desires produces repentance [i.e., a change of heart and life] that leads to salvation, and which brings no regrets. But the sorrow of the world [i.e., sorrow for wrongdoing for reasons unrelated to God or moral principles] produces [spiritual] death. 11) See how the very fact that you were made sorry from a godly motive has produced earnestness in you! [It produced] a desire to vindicate yourselves [i.e., by making amends for your wrongdoing]; an attitude of just anger [i.e., toward the wrongdoers]; a sense of fear [i.e., a fear of God for doing wrong]; an eager desire [i.e., to do the right thing]; a zeal [i.e., to correct problems]; and an attitude of avenging [i.e., that punished the wrongdoer]. You demonstrated in everything [you did] that you were pure [i.e., innocent] in this matter. [Note: This whole description of their conduct appears to be a reference to the incident mentioned in 2:1-11]. 12) So, although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the person who did the wrong, nor for the one who was wronged, but so that you could realize before God how devoted to us you are.

13) So, we have been encouraged, and in addition to [our] encouragement, we were very glad that Titus was so happy [also], because you had refreshed his spirit. 14) For if there is anything I

have boasted to him about you, you did not cause me to be ashamed of it. But as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting to Titus [about you] proved to be true also. 15) And he has great affection for you when he remembers how obedient all of you were [i.e., obedient to his or Paul's instructions to the church], and how you welcomed him with fear and trembling [i.e., with a respectful, submissive spirit]. 16) I am glad I can have so much confidence in you about everything.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1) Now, brothers, we want you to know about the favor God has given to the churches in Macedonia. 2) [It is] how, in spite of their suffering severe trials, their overflowing joy and extreme poverty produced an overwhelming expression of generosity. 3) For I testify that they gave [financial help] to the full limit of their ability, yes and even beyond it. [And they did this] entirely on their own, 4) [even] pleading with us and requesting the privilege of taking part in this service to the saints [i.e., God's holy people] in Jerusalem. [See also 9:1-15; I Cor. 16:1-2; Rom. 15:25-28]. 5) And they did not [just] do as we had hoped, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and [then] to us through the will of God. 6) So, [i.e., because of your enthusiastic response to this need. See verse 10], we urged Titus, who had previously begun [taking up this collection], to help you also complete this favorable work [i.e., by finalizing it]. 7) But just as you excel in everything [else]; in your faith, in your speaking; in your knowledge [Note: Possibly these refer to spiritual gifts. See I Cor. 12:8-10], in your eagerness [to serve], and in your love for us, now you people should also excel in this favorable work [i.e., of giving financial help to needy people]. 8) I am not saying this [to you] as a command, but by telling you how eager others are [to help], to find out how genuine your love is also. 9) For you know the unearned favor of our Lord Jesus Christ, [how] that even though He was rich, He became poor for your sakes, so that through His poverty you people could become [spiritually] rich.

10) Now here is my advice on what is best to do in this matter: Since you were the first ones to begin [taking up a collection] a year ago, [now you should] not only be doing something [about it], but [you should continue] wanting to do something [as well]. 11) So,

now finish doing it also, so that just as you were eager to want to, you will also [be eager to] finish it, according to your ability. **12)** For if the eagerness is there, [then] whatever a person has [to give] is acceptable, and not what he does not have. **13)** I am not saying this to make it easy for others [to give] and difficult for you people, **14)** but that there will be equality [i.e., in everyone's giving]. Your abundance can now supply their need, so that their abundance can [later] supply your need. [That way] there can be equality, **15)** as it is written [Ex. 16:18], "The person who gathered much [i.e., manna] did not have any left over, and the one who gathered [only] a little [still] had plenty."

16) But I thank God for putting the same concern [that I have] for you in the heart of Titus. **17)** For he not only accepted our urging, but being very diligent himself, he went to you of his own accord [i.e. Titus had wanted to go to Corinth even before being urged to]. **18)** And we have sent [i.e., are sending] with him the brother who is praised throughout all the churches for [his work in] preaching the Gospel [Note: This "brother" cannot be identified with any certainty]. **19)** And not only this, but he was also appointed by the churches to travel with us in [taking] this gift [to Jerusalem] as we minister in order to honor the Lord Himself, and to demonstrate our eagerness [to help poor people]. **20)** [We made this arrangement] to avoid anyone blaming us for the way we handled this generous gift. **21)** For we take measures to do what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of people.

22) And we have sent [i.e., are sending] with them our brother [Note: This is a different person from the one mentioned in verse 10], who has often proven his diligence to us in many ways, and is now proving to be even more diligent because of the great confidence he has in you [i.e., confidence in the Corinthians completing their collection for the poor]. **23)** As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow-worker on your behalf. As for our brothers [i.e., those who will accompany him], they are the messengers of the churches and an honor to Christ. **24)** [So], demonstrate in front of the churches evidence of your love [for them] and our reason for boasting about you.

CHAPTER NINE

1) Now it is unnecessary for me to write you about this service to God's holy people [in Jerusalem, who were in need]. 2) For I know how eager you [already] are, and I have boasted about you to the Macedonians, that Achaia [Note: This was the southernmost province of Greece, where Corinth was located] has been prepared [to give] since last year. And your enthusiasm has stirred up most of them [to give also]. 3) But I have sent the brothers [See 8:18, 22], so that our boasting about you being prepared will not prove to be empty words. 4) For if any Macedonians come with me and learn that you are not prepared, we, not to mention you, will be ashamed for having been so over confident. 5) So, I thought it necessary to urge the brothers [See verse 3] to visit you ahead of time and arrange beforehand for your previously promised generous gift. Then it will be ready [when I arrive] as a generously given gift and not as something given grudgingly.

6) But [remember] this: The person who plants only a few seeds will harvest a meager crop. And the one who plants many seeds [Note: The Greek says, "plants with blessings"] will harvest a bumper crop. 7) Each person should give what he has decided to in his heart, not grudgingly, nor out of a feeling that he has to, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8) And God is able to provide you with abundant gifts, so that you will always have plenty of everything, and that you will also have plenty for doing every good deed. 9) As it is written [Psa. 112:9], "He has distributed [gifts] widely; he has given to poor people; his generosity will last forever." 10) Now God, who provides seeds to the planter and bread for food, will [also] supply and [even] multiply your seeds for planting, and will increase the harvest of your generosity. 11) You will be made rich in everything so you can be generous in every way. This will result in people thanking God [for what you have done] through us.

12) For the rendering of this service not only [fully] meets the needs of the saints [i.e., God's holy people], but also produces overflowing expressions of thanksgiving to God from many people. 13) Because you people have proven [yourselves] by this service, the poor Christians in Jerusalem will praise God for your obedient [spirit] in professing [commitment to] the Gospel of Christ, and for your

generous contribution to them and to everyone else. 14) And when they see the outstanding [evidence of] God's favor in you, they will pray for you with deep affection [or, "will long to see you"]. 15) I thank God for His indescribable gift [i.e., Christ. See Rom. 8:32].

CHAPTER TEN

1) Now I Paul, who am humble [when speaking] face to face with you, but bold when I am away from you, urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ [Note: This means either Paul was imitating Christ's behavior or that the Corinthians were to do so]: 2) I make this request so that I do not have to be bold when I am present [with you], and feel compelled to speak in an authoritative tone to some people [there] who think we are living by worldly standards. 3) For although we live in the world [i.e., in a human body], we do not wage war [i.e., for God and against evil] on a worldly level [i.e., by using the tactics of unsaved people]. 4) For the weapons of our warfare are not like the world's [i.e., which rely on human ingenuity and unspiritual principles], but they are empowered by God to overthrow [Satanic] fortifications. 5) We overthrow [vain] reasonings and every lofty idea raised against the knowledge of God [i.e., as revealed through the Gospel], and take captive [our] every thought to [make it] obey Christ. 6) [And we are] prepared to punish all disobedience when your obedience is complete. [Note: This probably refers to the Corinthian church dealing with its unrepentant member. See I Cor. 5:3-5].

7) You people are looking [merely] at the appearance of things [or, "You should look at what is obvious!" In either case, it suggests they were misjudging Paul's ministry]. If any person is confident within himself that he belongs to Christ, he should reflect on this again: We are just as much Christ's [servants] as he is. 8) For even if I should boast too much about the authority the Lord gave us for building you people up [spiritually], and not tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it. 9) [Now] I do not want to appear to be trying to scare you by my letters. 10) For some people are saying, "Paul's letters are heavy and severe, but in person he is [physically?] weak and his speaking ability is unimpressive." 11) Such people should consider this: What we say in our letters when we are away is what we will do when we are there.

12) For we do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with certain people who commend themselves. People who measure their [spiritual] stature by what [they think] they are, and compare their [spiritual] status with their own set of standards, are foolish. **13)** But we will not boast beyond our proper boundaries [Note: This may mean that Paul was not attempting to exercise apostolic authority outside the parameters assigned to him by God], but will restrict our boasting to the area assigned to us by God as a field of service, which includes you people [there in Corinth]. **14)** Now we are not going too far in claiming you as part of our outreach, since we were the first ones to come to you with the Gospel of Christ. **15)** So, we will not go beyond our proper limits by boasting of work [already] done by others, but we hope that, as your faith increases, our field of service among you will [also] greatly expand. **16)** [This is] so we can proclaim the good news [about Christ] even to areas beyond you [Note: Perhaps Paul here alludes to such places as Italy and Spain], and [thereby] not boast over what has [already] been done in someone else's field of service. **17)** [Jer. 9:24 says], "But the person who boasts should boast about the Lord." **18)** For it is not the person who commends himself that is approved [by God], but the one whom the Lord commends.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) I wish that you could put up with a little "foolishness" from me, but you really are doing that already. **2)** For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy, because I promised you in marriage to one husband, that I might present you to Christ as a pure virgin. **3)** But I am afraid that somehow, just as the snake tricked Eve by his cunning, your minds might [also] be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. **4)** For if someone comes [to you] proclaiming another "Jesus," whom we [apostles] had not preached, or if you people receive a different "spirit" from the one you have [already] received, or a different "gospel" from the one you have [already] accepted, you put up with him quite well. **5)** For I consider myself not to be one bit inferior to those "super apostles." [Note: Paul is referring to his opponents there in Corinth who claimed apostolic authority]. **6)** But even though I am an unpolished speaker, I am not lacking in knowledge. We have made this clear to you in every way.

7) Or, did I sin by putting myself down in order to build you

people up, because I preached the Gospel of God to you without taking [financial] support? 8) I [virtually] robbed other churches by accepting [financial] support from them in order to serve you. 9) And when I was there with you and in need, I was not a [financial] burden to anyone, for when the brothers came from Macedonia they provided me with what I lacked, so I kept myself from being a burden to you in every way and will continue to do so. 10) As sure as the truth of Christ is in my heart, no one will stop me from boasting about this [arrangement] throughout the regions of Achaia. [Note: This was the province where Corinth was located]. 11) Why [am I doing this]? Is it because I do not love you? God knows [I do]. 12) But what I am doing, I will continue to do, so that I can cut off the opportunity from those who want an occasion [to receive financial support for themselves because of my example of receiving it]. They want to boast [that they are preaching] on the same terms as I do. [Note: Paul's argument seems to be that one reason for his forgoing financial support was so those "super apostles" in Corinth (see verse 5) would not be able to use his example to wrongfully exact financial support from the church]

13) For such men are false apostles; they are deceitful workers, who disguise themselves as [true] apostles of Christ. 14) And it is no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light [i.e., someone pure and righteous]. 15) Therefore, it should not be surprising for Satan's ministers to disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness. Their [final] end will be what they deserve for such actions.

16) Again I say, no one should think I am foolish, but if you do, [then] accept me that way, so that I too can boast a little bit. 17) What I am saying in this boastful [show of] confidence is not what the Lord would [say], but is [just plain] "foolishness." 18) Since many [other] people boast about worldly matters, I will boast about such things also. 19) For, since you people are so smart, you gladly put up with fools. 20) For you put up with someone, [even] if he enslaves you [i.e., exercises control over your life]; [even] if he takes [unfair] advantage of you; [even] if he acts superior toward you; and [even] if he slaps you in the face. 21) I am ashamed to say that we were [too] weak to do such things. [Note: Paul is probably saying, sarcastically, "We are too 'weak' to take financial advantage of people and mistreat them the way those 'super apostles' there in Corinth were doing"]. Yet, in whatever [matters] anyone [there] dares to boast about, (now I am really speaking foolishly), I will dare to boast also. 22) Are they [i.e., Paul's opponents there in Corinth]

Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. **23)** Are they servants of Christ? (I am really talking like a crazy person now). I am more [of a servant, than they are]. I have worked much harder. I have been in prison more often. I have been flogged more severely. I have been in danger of death more frequently. **24)** I received thirty-nine lashes from the Jews five times. **25)** I was beaten with rods three times. I was stoned once. I suffered shipwreck three times and spent a night and a day in the open water. **26)** I have been on frequent journeys; in danger from rivers; in danger from thieves; in danger from my own people; in danger from the Gentiles; in danger in the city; in danger in the desert; in danger in the ocean; in danger among false brothers. **27)** I have worked and suffered. I have often gone without sleep, been hungry and thirsty, often gone without food [i.e., for spiritual reasons], been cold and had inadequate clothing. **28)** Besides these [kinds of] things [or, "besides these outward things"], there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. **29)** Who is weak, and I do not feel their weakness? Who is led astray [from God], and I do not burn [i.e., with righteous anger over the one who caused it]? **30)** If I must boast, I will boast about the things that show my weakness. **31)** The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who should be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. **32)** [When I was] in Damascus [Note: Paul here refers to his conversion. See Acts 9:1ff], the governor [who served] under King Aretas, was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to capture me, **33)** but I escaped from his hands by being lowered in a basket through a window in the [city] wall.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1) Although I must boast about myself [See 11:21-27], it [really] is not profitable. So, I will go on to [tell about] visions and [inspired] revelations given [to me] from the Lord. **2)** I know a man in [fellowship with] Christ who, fourteen years ago, was taken [literally, "snatched"] up to the third heaven. [Note: The first heaven would be where birds fly; the second where the stars are; and the third where God is]. (I do not know whether he was in his physical body or whether it was an "out-of-the-body" experience, but God knows). [Note: Paul is obviously telling about a personal experience. See verse 7]. **3)** I know that this man --- whether in

his body or out of it, I do not know, but God does --- 4) was [actually] taken up into Paradise. [Note: This is the same as the "third heaven" of the previous verse, and was a place in the presence of God. See Luke 23:43; Rev. 2:7]. There he heard inexpressible words which are not permitted for people to repeat. 5) I will boast on behalf of this person, but I will not boast about myself [anymore], except about my weaknesses. 6) However, if I wanted to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be telling the truth. But I will hold back, so that no one will think more of me than what he sees or hears from me. 7) But, so that I would not become too conceited over the tremendous revelations [I received], a "thorn in the flesh" was given to me as a messenger from Satan to torment me. [Note: This "thorn" was probably some physical handicap, possibly defective eyesight. See Gal. 4:14-15; 6:11]. 8) I pled with the Lord about this matter three times, that He would remove this problem from me. 9) But God said to me, "My unearned favor is enough for you, for my power is made complete in [your] weakness." Therefore, I will most gladly boast, so that the power of Christ can rest on me. 10) So, I am pleased to [endure] weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and difficulties, [all] for Christ's sake. For when I am weak [physically], then I am strong [spiritually].

11) I have become foolish [i.e., by my boasting], but you made me do it [i.e., in order to vindicate myself]. For I should have been commended by you [i.e., for my effective ministry there in Corinth], because I was not inferior in any way to those "super apostles" [See 11:5], even though I am nothing. 12) Truly, I endured [opposition] patiently, while showing evidence of being an apostle among you. I performed [supernatural] signs, and wonders and powerful miracles. 13) For in what way were you people inferior to the rest of the churches, unless it was that I was not a [financial] burden to you? Forgive me for this wrong.

14) Now, this is the third time I have been ready to come to you, and I will not be a [financial] burden to you. For I do not want your possessions but you yourselves, because children should not [have to] save up for their parents, but parents for their children. 15) So, I will most gladly spend [all I have], and [even] spend myself for the sake of your souls. If I love you so much, should you love me less [than that]? 16) So, let it be [said] that I did not become a burden to you. But being a clever person, [some are saying] that I took you in by trickery. [Note: Paul is saying that even though he took no financial support from the

church, they are accusing him of taking financial advantage of them through other people]. **17)** Did I take [financial] advantage of you by any of those men I sent to you? **18)** I urged Titus [i.e., to go to you to arrange for the special offering. See 8:6], and I sent the brother with him. [See 8:18]. Did Titus take any [financial] advantage of you? Do we not [both] have the same attitude [in this matter]? Do we not [both] follow the same procedures?

19) You have been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves [have you not]? We are [simply] speaking [the truth] before God in [fellowship with] Christ. But everything [we are doing], dear friends, is to build you up [spiritually]. **20)** For I am afraid that somehow, when I come [to you], I might not find you the way I want you to be, and you might not find me the way you want me to be. I am afraid there might be quarrelling, jealousy, angry outbursts, factious spirits, slander, gossip, arrogance and [other] disturbances [there]. **21)** I am afraid that, when I come, my God will humiliate me in front of you, and I will be grieved over many [of you] who have sinned in the past without repenting of the [moral] impurity, sexual immorality and unrestrained indecency they have practiced.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) This will be my third visit to you. [Deut. 19:15 says], "Every matter should be settled by the testimony of two or three witnesses." **2)** I told you the last time I was there, and now before returning, I [again] warn those who have sinned in the past as well as the rest, that if I come again I will not spare you [i.e., I will rebuke and discipline you], **3)** since you are looking for proof that Christ is speaking through me. Christ is not weak in His dealing with you, but is powerful among you. [Note: Paul probably refers to the positive effects of his ministry there in Corinth]. **4)** For He was weak when He was crucified [i.e., by assuming a human body capable of suffering and death], but [now] He lives by God's power. For we too are weak, [along] with Him [i.e., each of us experiences the frailties of a human body], but by [this same] power from God, we will live with Him to serve you. [Note: The various translations differ widely on how to properly translate this difficult verse].

5) Put yourselves to a test; see if you are [really] in the faith [i.e., see if you are genuine Christians]; examine yourselves! Or, do

you not realize that Jesus Christ is in your hearts, unless [of course] you fail the test [i.e., unless you are counterfeit Christians]. **6)** But I hope that you people will realize that we [apostles] are not counterfeit. **7)** Now we pray to God that you people will not do anything wrong. That is not so that we will appear approved [by God], but so that you will do what is right, even though we may appear to be counterfeits. **8)** For we [apostles] have no power [to act] against the truth, but [only] for the truth. [Note: Paul here alludes to his gifts and ministry being intended only to promote what was right according to God's truth]. **9)** For we are glad when we are weak and you are powerful. And we are also praying for your complete restoration [i.e., to spiritual maturity]. **10)** This is the reason I am writing these things while away from you, so that I will not have to deal severely with you when I am there. For the Lord gave me authority to build people up [spiritually] and not to tear them down.

11) Finally, brothers, goodbye [or, "be glad"]. Be fully restored [spiritually]. Be comforted [or, "exhort one another"]. Think alike on things. Be at peace among yourselves. And the God of love and peace will be with you. **12)** Greet one another with a holy kiss [i.e., to signify affection, yet without sensuality]. **13)** All the saints [i.e., God's holy people] send you their greetings.

14) May the unearned favor of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

GALATIANS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] Paul, an apostle, (not from [the authority of] men, or through the [agency] of a man, but by [a direct commission from] Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead). 2) [It also comes from] all of the brothers who are with me [and is being sent] to the churches of Galatia [i.e., Iconium, Derbe, Lystra and Antioch of Pisidia]. 3) May you have unearned favor and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4) who gave Himself to [save us from] our sins so that He might deliver us from [the control and condemnation of] this present evil world. [This is] according to the will of our God and Father, 5) to whom [may there] be honor forever and ever. May it be so.

6) I am astonished that you people are so quickly abandoning God [i.e., by rejecting His truth], who called you [to Himself] through the unearned favor bestowed [on us] by Christ. [You are turning] to a different "gospel," 7) although it is really not a different one, but rather some people are causing you trouble by trying to pervert the [true] Gospel of Christ. 8) However, if we [apostles] or even an angel [claiming to be] from heaven were to preach any other "gospel" than the one we have [already] preached to you, let that person be cut off from God's [salvation]. 9) I repeat what I have already said: If any person preaches to you a "gospel" other than what you have already received [from us apostles], he should be cut off from God's [salvation]. 10) For am I seeking [to gain] the favor of men or of God? Or, am I striving to please people [by what I do]? If I were still [trying] to please people, I would not be a [true] servant of Christ.

11) For I would like to clarify for you, brothers, the situation regarding the Gospel that I have preached: It did not originate from man. 12) [Furthermore], I did not receive this [Gospel message] from any person, nor was I taught it [by anyone]. Instead, it came to me through [a divine] revelation from Jesus Christ. 13) For you have heard about the way I lived in the past, when I was in the Jewish religion, [that is], how I mercilessly persecuted the church of God, making havoc of it. 14) I advanced in the Jewish religion beyond

many of my contemporaries among my countrymen. I have been extremely more zealous in advocating the traditions [taught] by my forefathers. 15) But then it was the good pleasure of God, who set me apart [for this purpose] before I was born, to call me [to this ministry] through His unearned favor. 16) [And when I was called], God revealed His Son to me so that I could preach [about] Him to the Gentiles. [When this happened] I immediately avoided discussing the matter with anyone. 17) I did not go up to Jerusalem to [discuss it with] those who had become apostles before me either; instead I went away into Arabia. [Note: This is probably when Paul received supernatural power from the Holy Spirit]. Then afterward, I returned to Damascus. [Note: This was in Syria where Paul was converted].

18) Then, three years later I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [i.e., Peter], and stayed with him for fifteen days. 19) But [on this trip] I did not see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. [Note: This "James" was not one of the original twelve apostles. See Matt. 10:2-4]. 20) Now [realizing I am] in God's presence, I am not lying about any of these things. 21) [Then after that] I went to the territories of Syria and Cilicia. [Note: Cilicia was where Paul's home town of Tarsus was located. See Acts 9:30]. 22) [At this time] I was still unknown personally to churches in [the province of] Judea, which are in [fellowship with] Christ. 23) They had only heard it said about me, "This person, who had once persecuted us [Christians], is now preaching the faith he once made havoc of." 24) So, they gave honor to God for [what He was doing through] me.

CHAPTER TWO

1) Then, fourteen years later I went up to Jerusalem again, [along] with Barnabas, and I took Titus also with me [this time]. 2) [It was] in response to [a divine] revelation that I went [there] and explained to them [i. e., the apostles and elders] the Gospel [message] that I had been preaching among the Gentiles. Then [later on I presented it] privately before those who were highly regarded [i.e., the three apostles, verse 9] so [they would have verification that] my running [i.e., ministry] had not been, nor was now, in vain. 3) But they did not even require that Titus, a Greek [i.e., a Gentile] who was with me, become circumcised. 4) For [certain] false brothers, who were secretly brought in to observe us practicing our liberty in Christ

Jesus [i.e., by not having Titus circumcised], attempted to place us [back] under the bondage [of Mosaic law keeping]. 5) But we did not submit ourselves to their influence for even an hour, so that you people might be able to continue [following] the truth of the Gospel. 6) These apostles, who were highly regarded (although it really does not matter to me what they are, for God does not show partiality to any particular person); these men, I say, provided me with nothing [concerning the Gospel message]. 7) On the contrary, they saw that I had [already] been entrusted [by God] with the Gospel for the uncircumcised ones [i.e., for Gentiles], just as Peter [had been entrusted by God] with the Gospel for the circumcised ones [i.e., for Jews]. 8) For God assigned Peter to be an apostle to the circumcised ones [i.e., Jews], and me to be an apostle to the Gentiles. 9) Also, when they perceived that this [special] favor [of preaching to Gentiles] was granted to me, James, Cephas [i.e., Peter] and John, the highly regarded pillars [i.e., leaders of the church] extended to me and Barnabas their right hands [signifying an agreement] to share [in the preaching of the Gospel], with us going to the Gentiles and they going to the circumcised ones [i.e., Jews]. 10) The only thing that they encouraged us to do was to remember [the needs of] poor people, which I was very eager to do. [See Acts 24:17].

11) But when Cephas came to Antioch [of Syria], I confronted him personally [about a matter] for which he deserved to be condemned. 12) For, before certain [leaders] came from James [i.e., Jesus' brother, a leader of the Jerusalem church, See Acts 12:17; 15:13-22], he had eaten [a social meal] with some Gentiles. But when these men came, he abruptly discontinued this practice out of fear of the circumcised ones [i.e., out of concern for what the Jews would think of him]. 13) Then the rest of the Jews also discontinued [eating with Gentiles] along with Peter, until even Barnabas was influenced to go along with this hypocritical practice. 14) But, when I saw that they did not act in harmony with [the principles of] the truth of the Gospel [message], I said to Cephas in front of everyone, "If you, being a Jew, act like a Gentile [by showing such discrimination], how do you expect to persuade Gentiles to live like Jews [i.e., like Christian Jews who are taught to love all people]?" 15) Although we are Jews by natural birth, and not sinful Gentiles [who do not have a relationship with God], 16) still we know that a person is not justified [i.e., made right with God] by [perfect obedience to] the law of

Moses, but rather through faith in [the person and work of] Christ. [Knowing this] we have trusted in Christ Jesus [to save us], so that we might be made right with God by trusting in Him and not by [our compliance with] the requirements of the law of Moses. Because by such law-compliance no one can be made right with God. 17) But, if while we were trying to be made right with God through a relationship with Christ, we were discovered to still be sinners [by acting like unsaved Gentiles], does that mean Christ is responsible for our sin? Of course not. 18) For if I try to build up again what I had already destroyed [i.e., by returning to depend on compliance with the law of Moses to become right with God, after having rejected this system by trusting in Christ to save me], I would certainly be guilty of sin. 19) For it was by means of [this system of] law-keeping that I [realized I] was dead. This was so I could find life through a relationship with God. 20) I have been crucified [i.e., died] with Christ, and so I am not the one who lives [anymore] but rather, it is Christ who lives in my heart. And [now] my entire life is being lived by trusting in the Son of God [to save and keep me], because He loved me and gave Himself up for me. 21) [In doing this] I am not trying to disregard God's unearned favor, for if a person could become right with God by [perfect obedience to the requirements of] the law of Moses, then Christ died for nothing.

CHAPTER THREE

1) You foolish people [of the churches] of Galatia [Note: This was a province in present-day Turkey], who tricked you? Was not Jesus Christ graphically portrayed before you as being put to death on a cross? 2) The only thing I would like to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Holy Spirit [into your lives] by [meeting the requirements of] the law of Moses or by hearing [and obeying the message] of faith [in Christ]? 3) Are you so foolish [as to believe that after] having begun [your Christian lives] through [the power of] the Holy Spirit, you can [now] become complete by [living according to] your human strength? 4) Did you suffer so many things [for the faith] all for nothing? [That is], if it really was for nothing? 5) Therefore, as God has provided you with the Holy Spirit and has produced miracles among you, [do you think He has done all this] as a result of your obeying the requirements of the law of Moses or as a result of hearing

[and responding to the message of] the faith?

6) [An example of this is] Abraham, who believed God's [promise] and [because of such faith] he was considered right with God. 7) You should know, then, that people who have faith are [truly] God's children. 8) And, predicting that God would consider the Gentiles right with Him by [their] faith, the Scriptures previously recorded [this promise of] the Gospel to Abraham by saying [Gen. 12:3], "All nations will receive a blessing through your descendant [i.e., Jesus]." 9) So then, all those who have faith [in Jesus] receive a blessing along with Abraham, a man of faith. 10) For all who seek to be right with God by trying to meet all the requirements of the law of Moses are under a curse [from God], because it is written [Deut. 27:26], "Every person is cursed [i.e., cut off from God] who does not continue to obey all of the requirements written in the law of Moses." 11) Now it is evident that no person can be made right with God by [obeying all the requirements of] the law of Moses for [Hab. 2:4 says], "The righteous person will obtain life by [his] faith [in God]." 12) Now the law of Moses is not based on one's faith, for [Lev. 18:5 says], "The person who obeys the requirements of the law of Moses will obtain life by doing so." 13) Christ bought us back from the curse [caused by our not obeying all the requirements] of the law of Moses; He became a curse for us [by dying on the cross], for it is written [Deut. 21:23], "Every one who hangs on a tree [i.e., a cross] is cursed [i.e., cut off from God]." 14) [This happened] so that the blessing [promised] to Abraham might be received by the Gentiles through [the person and work of] Christ, so that we might receive the promised [gift of the] Holy Spirit through [our] faith [in Jesus].

15) Brothers, I will use an illustration from the way people deal with each other: Even though an agreement is made between people, once it is finally settled, no one can cancel it or include additional provisions to it. 16) Now [specific] promises were made to Abraham and to his seed [i.e., descendants]. [God] did not say "seeds" [plural] as though He were referring to many persons but "seed" [singular] showing that He meant one [descendant]; [Gen. 13:15 says], "And to your seed," referring to Christ. 17) Here is what I am saying: The Agreement originally made by God [with Abraham], with its attending promises, was not canceled when the law of Moses was given some four hundred and thirty years later. 18) For if the inheritance [of never ending life] can be obtained by

[obeying the requirements of] the law of Moses, it would not come from the promise [of God]; but God provided [this inheritance] for Abraham according to [His] promise.

19) What then is [the benefit of] the law of Moses? It was introduced [as part of God's revelation] in order to define what sin was, until the seed [i.e., Jesus] would come, to whom the promise [of never ending life] was made. The law of Moses was ordained through [the medium of] angels and [delivered] through the hand of an intermediary [i.e., Moses]. 20) Now an intermediary does not serve in a situation involving [only] one person. However, God is one [Being]. 21) Is the law of Moses contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could provide [never ending] life, then a person could be considered right with God by [obeying the requirements of such] a law. 22) But the Scriptures indicate that everything [i.e., everyone] is under the control of sin, so that the promise [of never ending life] could be available [only] to those who have faith in Jesus Christ.

23) But before faith [in Christ] became available, we [Jews] were kept in bondage under [condemnation for not obeying perfectly] the law of Moses. [This condition existed] until the faith [i.e., the Gospel message] was made known [to people]. 24) So, the law of Moses became like our "transportation to school", bringing us to [the school of] Christ where we [learn how to be] made right with God by faith [in Christ]. 25) But now that faith [in Christ] has become available, we are no longer in need of this "transportation to school."

26) For all of you are children of God through your faith in Christ Jesus [as God's only Son]. 27) For all of you who were immersed into [a relationship with] Christ have been clothed with Him [i.e., His life]. 28) [In this relationship] there is to be no [distinction between] Jews or Greeks [i.e., Gentiles], slaves or free persons, men or women; for all of you are united into one [body] because of your relationship with Christ Jesus. 29) And if you belong to Christ, then you are [truly] Abraham's seed [i.e., his spiritual descendants] and thereby [you will] inherit what was promised to him [i.e., God's blessings].

CHAPTER FOUR

1) But as long as the person who has an inheritance coming

to him is a child, he is really no better off than a slave, even though he himself is [rightfully] entitled [to the inheritance]. 2) He is [still] under [the direction of] guardians and managers [of his affairs] until the day his father decides [to give him his inheritance]. 3) So also, when we [Jews] were like children, we were under bondage to the basic worldly rules [of the law of Moses]. 4) But, when [God's] timing fully arrived, He sent His Son, born to a woman [i.e., Mary], born during [the time when] the law [of Moses was still in effect], 5) so that He could buy back [from Satan] those who were [still] under [obligation to] the law of Moses, and that we could become adopted children. 6) And because you are [His] children, God sent the Holy Spirit of His Son into our hearts, to call out, "*Abba*," [which means] "Father." 7) So [now], you are no longer a slave but a child, and since you are a child, you also will receive an inheritance through [the blessings of] God.

8) At that time, when you did not know God [as your Father], you were in bondage to those who were, by nature, not really gods at all. 9) But now that you have come to know God [as your Father], or rather, to be known by Him [as His children], how can you turn back again to the weak, cheap, elementary teachings [of the law of Moses], to which you [seem to] desire to become enslaved? 10) You are observing [certain] days, and months, and seasons, and years [as binding religious holidays]. 11) I am afraid for you, [i.e., for your spiritual safety], that possibly I may have spent a lot of effort on your behalf for nothing.

12) I urge of you, brothers, become like me [in this matter], for I have become like you. You did not do anything wrong to me, [even as I have not wronged you]. 13) But you are aware [I am sure] that when I first came preaching the Gospel [message] to you, I had a physical handicap. 14) And when you could have been tempted to look down on me [because of the nature of my affliction], instead you welcomed me as [if I were] an angel, or even Christ Jesus Himself! 15) Now where are those good feelings you had for me? For I can [honestly] testify that [at one time] you would have even gouged out your eyes and given them to me [for sight] if that had been possible. 16) So then, have I [now] become your enemy because I have told you the truth [about your condition]?

17) Certain people are showing quite an interest in you, but it is not for your benefit. Instead, they are trying to separate you

[from me], in hope that you will seek them out [for help]. 18) Now, it is fine for someone to want to seek you out anytime, if it is for a good purpose, and not just when I am around [to be impressed]. 19) My little children [i.e., dear ones], I am again deeply pained [as a woman in childbirth] over your [spiritual] condition, until [the life of] Christ becomes formed in your character. 20) But I would like to be present with you and change the tone [of my remarks], because I am very distressed over your condition.

21) Tell me, those of you who desire to be under [obligation to the requirements of] the law of Moses: Are you really paying attention to what the law of Moses says? 22) For it is written in the law about Abraham's two sons [Gen. 16]; one [was] by his slave woman [Hagar] and the other by the free woman, [his wife, Sarah]. 23) Now the son [Ishmael], born to the slave woman, was born simply of their natural relationship; but the son [Isaac], born to the free woman, was born in fulfillment of a [divine] promise. 24) This set of circumstances contains an illustration; for these two women [Hagar and Sarah] represent the two Agreements [between God and mankind]. The one [Agreement], given at Mount Sinai, represents Hagar, whose children became [the Israelites], enslaved under bondage [to the requirements of the law of Moses]. 25) Now this woman, Hagar, is similar to Mount Sinai, in Arabia, and represents the present [earthly] Jerusalem [i.e., Israel], consisting of children in bondage [to the law of Moses]. 26) But the heavenly Jerusalem [Heb. 12:22] consists of free people, and is the mother of us [Christians]. 27) For it is written [Isa. 40:1], "[Woman] you should be happy that you have not had children. Cry over your inability to experience the pain of childbirth. For the deserted woman has had more children than the one with a husband."

28) Now, brothers, you [Christians] are children of the promise [made to Abraham. See 3:29] just like Isaac, [Abraham's son] was. 29) But, just as it was then --- the son born in the ordinary way [i.e., Ishmael] persecuting the one born according to the Holy Spirit's [leading, i.e., Isaac] --- so it is now [i.e., Jews urging compliance with the requirements of the law of Moses persecuting those who refuse to return to dependance on that law for salvation. See 3:1-3]. 30) What does the Scripture say about this matter? [It says, Gen. 21:10-12], "Get rid of the slave woman [Hagar], with her son [Ishmael]; for the son of the slave woman [Ishmael] will not inherit [what God

promised to Abraham and his descendants], along with the son of the free woman [i.e., Isaac]." 31) Therefore, brothers, we [Christians] are not the [spiritual] children of the slave woman [Hagar] but of the free woman [Sarah].

CHAPTER FIVE

1) Christ set us free [from condemnation under the law of Moses], so we could stay free! Remain where you are then, and do not get tangled up again in the enslaving harness [of the law of Moses].

2) Look, I Paul am telling you that, if you revert to [the practice of] circumcision [i.e., the Jewish rite of identity, signifying the responsibility to observe the law of Moses], then Christ's [sacrifice] will be of no value to you. 3) Yes, I declare to every person who attempts to require circumcision [as a means of gaining acceptance with God], that he must also obey everything else required by the law of Moses. 4) Those of you who seek to be right with God by observing the requirements of the law of Moses have severed yourselves from [your relationship with] Christ; you have fallen away from God's unearned favor. 5) For we are waiting for the hope [to be fulfilled] of being made right with God by [the power of] the Holy Spirit. 6) For in [our relationship with] Christ neither the practice of circumcision nor refraining from its practice matters in any way; all that really matters is [having a genuine] faith [in Christ] that causes us to work [for Him] out of a genuine love [for Him and others].

7) You [Christians] were running [the race of life] well; who hindered you [from making further progress] so that [now] you are no longer obeying the truth? 8) [Your] being persuaded [to do this] was not motivated by God, who called you [into His fellowship]. 9) A little bit of yeast permeates the whole batch of dough [i.e., a few people can influence everyone else to do the wrong thing in this matter]. 10) [However], I have confidence in you, since we both have a relationship with the Lord, that you will not think differently [than I do] about this matter. But whoever is causing you trouble will be rightfully judged [and punished] for it. 11) But, brothers, if I were still preaching [that a person had] to be circumcised, why am I being persecuted? [Note: Paul's argument seems to be "I must not be preaching circumcision since I am being persecuted by those who believe in it"]. [If I preached that a person

had to be circumcised] then my preaching that Christ died on the cross would not be such an offense [to those who believe in it]. 12) I wish that those who are causing such a problem over wanting people to be circumcised would just mutilate themselves [while they are at it!]

13) For you brothers were called [by God] to enjoy your freedom; but do not use this freedom as an excuse for living a sinful life; instead, use it to render loving service to each other. 14) For the whole law of Moses can be fulfilled by [obeying this] one requirement [Lev. 19:18]: "You should love your neighbor the way you love yourself." 15) But if you [unlovingly] bite and eat one another [i.e., figuratively], be careful that you do not totally consume one another.

16) But, I am saying to you, live in harmony with the Holy Spirit's [desire for you] and [then] you will not [always] be giving in to the wrong desires of your body. 17) For what your body wants is in conflict with what the Holy Spirit wants [for you], and what the Holy Spirit wants conflicts with what your body wants, for these [two desires] are contrary to one another, so that you do not [always] do what you [really] want to. 18) But, if you are led by [what] the Holy Spirit [wants you to do], you are not under [obligation to meet the requirements of] the law of Moses. 19) Now those things done by the sinful, physical nature [of a person] are evident; they are these: sexual immorality, moral impurity, indecent conduct, 20) idol worship, occultic practices, hatefulness, dissension, jealousy, angry outbursts, factious spirits, divisiveness, party spirits, 21) envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you again, as I have done before, that those people who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22) But the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, 23) gentleness and self-control. There can be no law against [practicing] these things. 24) And those persons who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified [i.e., put out of their lives, Col. 3:4ff] the sinful cravings of the body, along with their passionate desires.

25) If we live by the [guidance of the] Holy Spirit, we should also walk in [the ways of] the Holy Spirit. 26) We should avoid foolish pride as well as provoking or envying one another.

CHAPTER SIX

1) Brothers, if any one of you is overwhelmed by a [particular] sin, those of you who are spiritually minded should [attempt to] restore such a person [to faithfulness]. But do it in a gentle way, being very careful that you yourself do not become tempted [to get involved in any sin]. 2) Take on yourselves the [spiritual] burdens of one another, for in doing so you will be fulfilling Christ's law [of love, John 13:35]. 3) For any person who thinks he is someone [important], when he is really nothing, is self-deceived. 4) But let each person test his own accomplishments so that he can determine if he should get credit for them or if his neighbor should. 5) For each person should shoulder the responsibility of his own work load.

6) But the person who is taught the word [of God] should provide his teacher with what he needs.

7) Do not be deceived; God will not be fooled. Whatever a person does with his life, he will reap [the results of it]. 8) If he engages in things to satisfy his own sinful desires, he will be [spiritually] destroyed for such conduct, but the one who engages in things to please the Holy Spirit will receive never ending life [as a result]. 9) And we should not become tired of doing good things, for eventually we will receive [never ending life] if we do not give up. 10) So then, we should do the right thing toward every person whenever we have the opportunity, and especially toward people who are part of God's family [i.e., those making up "the faith"].

11) Look at how large the letters are that I am using in writing this, and I am writing them myself.

12) Those who attempt to make a good impression by trying to force you to be circumcised really want only to avoid being persecuted for their commitment to Christ. 13) For not even those who practice circumcision comply with [the requirements of] the law of Moses, yet they want you to be circumcised so they can take credit for this physical evidence [of your compliance with the law of Moses]. 14) But the last thing I want to do is brag [about such things]. For [if I had any bragging to do at all], it would be about [salvation through] the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is through Him that this [sinful] world has been crucified [i.e., died] as far as I am

concerned and I have been crucified [i.e., died] as far as it is concerned. 15) For it does not matter whether a person practices circumcision or refrains from practicing it; what really matters is [whether or not a he is] a new creature [in the eyes of God]. 16) To all those people who live by this rule, may there be peace and mercy [from God] in their lives; that is, upon [those people who are truly] God's "Israel" [i.e., the church].

17) From now on no one should harass me [about such matters] for I carry around on my body the scars [left there in my service] for Christ.

18) May the unearned favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be in your inner person, brothers. May this be so.

EPHESIANS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, according to God's will, [and is being sent] to the saints [i.e., God's holy people] at Ephesus [Note: This was a major city in the western province of Asia Minor, and now a part of Turkey. The words "at Ephesus" are omitted in some manuscripts, suggesting it was a circular letter], and the faithful ones in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus [everywhere else?]. 2) May you have unearned favor and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3) May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised, for He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in [fellowship with] Christ. [Note: The term "heavenly realms" is used somewhat differently throughout this book. Here it refers to Christians as part of the church on earth]. 4) Even before the creation of the world God chose us, who are in [fellowship with] Christ, to be dedicated [to Him] and to be without just blame in His sight. Out of love 5) God predetermined that we should be [considered] His adopted children through [fellowship with] Christ. This is what pleased God and is what He wanted, 6) so that we would praise His glorious, unearned favor, which was freely given to us through the One whom God loved [i.e., Christ]. 7) In [fellowship with] Christ we have redemption [i.e., we have been bought back from Satan] through His blood, and have forgiveness of sins according to the abundance of God's unearned favor, 8) which He lavished on us. [He used] wisdom and understanding, 9) in doing what He intended through Christ, to make known to us His secret plan, according to what pleased Him. 10) [He did this] to fulfill His plan at the proper time, by bringing together everything [in the universe] under Christ's headship --- things both in heaven and on earth.

11) It is in [fellowship with] Christ that we [Jewish Christians] also were selected as [God's] inheritance [i.e., to receive His never ending blessings], having been predetermined according to the plan of God, who works out everything in harmony with what He wants. 12) The end [i.e., of being so predetermined] was that we [Jewish Christians], who had previously placed our hope in Christ,

should bring about the praise of God's splendor. 13) You [Gentiles] also, who are in Christ, after having heard the message of truth, the good news about your salvation, and [after] believing in Him, were sealed [i.e., as evidence of ownership] with the promised Holy Spirit. [or, "the Holy Spirit who brings promises"]. 14) He is a down payment of our inheritance, until God's own possession [i.e., His people] receives redemption. [Note: Here "redemption" refers to receiving a new body in heaven]. May this bring about praise to God's splendor.

15) For this reason also, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of the saints [i.e., God's holy people], 16) I do not stop thanking [God] for you. I keep asking, in my prayers, 17) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, will give you a spirit [i.e., a disposition] of wisdom and revelation [or, "give you the spiritual gifts of wisdom and revelation"], so you can have full knowledge of God. 18) I pray that your minds will be enlightened so that you will know what the hope is, to which God has called you, and what the glorious abundance is, of God's inheritance in the saints [Note: Paul wanted them to appreciate the value God placed on them], 19) and what God's tremendous power [working] in us believers is. [This power is] the same as that utilized by God's mighty strength, 20) which He exerted when raising Christ from the dead and seating Him at His right side in the heavenly realms [i.e., heaven itself]. 21) [There He is exalted] high above all rulers and authorities and powers and dominion and every name [i.e., title of honor] that can be given, not only in this present age but [also] in the one to come. 22) And God placed everything in subjection under His [i.e., Christ's] feet, and appointed Him to be head over all things to the church, 23) which is His [spiritual] body. The church is completely filled by Christ [or, "Christ is completely filled by God"], who completely fills everything in every way.

CHAPTER TWO

1) And you [Gentiles] were once [spiritually] dead because of your shortcomings and sins. 2) You practiced such things when you lived according to the evil ways of this world, and according to the ruler of the [spiritual] powers of the air. [Note: This refers to Satan, whose influence permeates life around us]. He is the [evil] spirit who is now at work

in people who are disobedient [to God]. 3) All of us [Jews] also once lived among such people, fulfilling the improper cravings of our physical being and doing what our bodies and minds desired. In this natural [unconverted] state we were deserving of [God's] wrath, just like the rest [of mankind]. 4) But God, who has great love for us and abundant mercy [toward us], 5) restored [spiritual] life to us with Christ, even though we were [spiritually] dead because of our sins --- it is by God's unearned favor that you have been saved. 6) God raised us up with Christ [See Col. 2:12] and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms [i.e., in the church. See 1:3] in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus. 7) This was so that, to future ages [of people on earth and in heaven], God could demonstrate the tremendous abundance of His unearned favor, expressed by His kindness to us in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus. 8) For you have been saved by God's unearned favor, through [your] faith, and that [salvation] was not the result of your own doing; it was the gift from God. 9) It was not the result of your own [good] deeds [See Titus 3:5], so that no one could boast [about it]. 10) For we [Christians] are the product of God's workmanship, [re-] created in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus for [the purpose of] doing good deeds. God had previously determined that this should be our practice.

11) So, you Gentiles by birth should remember what you once were. You are called "Uncircumcision" by those who are called "Circumcision" [i.e., the Jews], (which refers to a physical procedure performed by people). 12) [Remember] that you were at that time without Christ; [you were] excluded from citizenship in the nation of Israel; [you were] foreigners regarding the Agreements of [God's] promises. You had no hope and were without God in the world. 13) But now [that you are] in [fellowship with] Christ, you [Gentiles], who were once far away [from God], have been brought near [to Him] through the blood of Christ. 14) For Christ is [the source of] our peace. He made both [Jews and Gentiles] one people, and broke down the barrier wall of hostility that divided them, 15) by abolishing in His fleshly body the [entire Jewish] law of commandments contained in decrees. [This was] so that He could create in [unity with] Himself one new person [i.e., the church] out of the two peoples [i.e., Jews and Gentiles], thereby bringing about peace [between them]. 16) [This was also intended] to reestablish harmony between both of these peoples and God in [this] one body, through [Christ's death on]

the cross. By doing this He put to death the hostility [between them]. 17) And Christ came and preached peace to you [Gentiles], who were far away [from God], and peace to those [Jews] who were near [to Him]. 18) For through Him we [Jews and Gentiles] both have access to the Father by means of one Holy Spirit.

19) So then, you [Gentiles] are no longer foreigners and aliens [i.e., to God's promises. See verse 12], but you are fellow-citizens with the saints [i.e., God's holy people], and are part of God's family. 20) [You are] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets [See I Cor. 12:28], with Christ Jesus Himself being the principal stone by which the entire building is aligned. 21) In [harmony with] Him the entire building [i.e., the church] is properly assembled, rising into a dedicated temple for the Lord. [See I Cor. 3:16-17]. 22) In [harmony with] Him you people are also being constructed together into a place where God lives by His Spirit.

CHAPTER THREE

1) This is the reason that I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles, [pray for you. See 3:14-19].

2) [Note: Paul here digresses from his prayer, begun in 1:15-16, to explain the circumstances of his being a prisoner on behalf of these Gentiles]. [I assume] you have heard about my commission [to minister] to you, which was given to me by God's unearned favor. 3) [It is] that God's secret plan [i.e., revealed in the Gospel preached to Gentiles. See verse 6] was made known to me by way of a revelation. [See Acts 9:15; 22:21]. I have already written to you [about this] briefly [i.e., probably a reference to 1:9ff]. 4) So, when you read this you will be able to understand my insight into the secret plan of Christ, 5) which was not told to people of previous generations as it has now been revealed to His [i.e., Christ's] holy apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit. 6) This secret plan is that the Gentiles [now] share in the inheritance along with us [Jews], and are fellow-members of the body [i.e., the church], and that they share, along with us [Jews], in the promise of the Gospel, in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus. 7) I was made a minister [of the Gospel] according to the gift of God's unearned favor, which was given to me according to the working of His power. 8) This favor of preaching the unfathomable riches of Christ to the Gentiles was given

to me [even though] I am the least significant of all saints [i.e., God's holy people]. 9) [I was given the responsibility] to enlighten all people regarding the working out of God's secret plan, which has been kept hidden for ages in [the heart of] God, who created everything. 10) This was done so that now God's manysided wisdom could be made known through the church, to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms [Note: "Heavenly realms" here refers to the world around us, where these angelic beings (good or bad) view the unfolding of God's wonderful plan], 11) according to God's eternal purpose which He carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. 12) It is in [fellowship with] Christ that we have boldness and confident access [to God] through our faith in Him. 13) So, I am asking you people not to become discouraged over my sufferings on your behalf, for they are for your benefit [eventually].

14) This is the reason that I bow my knees [in prayer] to the Father, 15) from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its name. [Note: Here Paul resumes the prayer he began in verse 1]. 16) [I pray] that, according to God's glorious abundance, He would empower you to become [spiritually] strong through His Holy Spirit in your inner person, 17) so that Christ will live in your hearts through faith. [I pray] that you will be rooted and grounded in [your] love, 18) so that you, along with all the saints [i.e., God's holy people], will be [spiritually] strong enough to grasp how wide and long and high and deep [Christ's love is]; 19) and to know that His love for us surpasses [our] knowledge, so that you people will be completely filled with the fullness of God.

20) May there be to God, who is able to do infinitely more [for us] than we could [even] ask or think, according to [His] power at work in us --- 21) [I say] may there be praise to God in the church and in [or, "for"] Christ Jesus throughout all generations of people for ages and ages. May it be so.

CHAPTER FOUR

1) I urge you, therefore, as a prisoner of the Lord, to live in a way that measures up to [the standard required by] God when He called you. 2) Live in a humble, gentle and patient way, showing tolerance [for the weaknesses] of one another out of love [for them].

3) Eagerly try to maintain the unity produced by the Holy Spirit by being bound together in peace. 4) There is [only] one body [i.e., church] and one Holy Spirit, just as God also gave you one hope when He called you [See Titus 3:7]. 5) [There is] one Lord [i.e., Jesus], one faith [i.e., one body of teaching], one immersion [i.e., in water for the forgiveness of sins], 6) and one God and Father of all, who is over all and [works] through all and is in all [obedient believers].

7) But [God's] unearned favor was given to each one of us, according to the gift allotted [to us] by Christ. 8) Therefore, it says [Psa. 68:18], "When He ascended on high [i.e., to heaven], He led a procession of captured prisoners [behind Him] [Note: This originally referred to God leading His people in triumph over Israel's enemies, but here is applied to Christ], and gave gifts to [various] people." 9) (But what does "He ascended" mean if not that He also [first] descended to the lower parts of the earth [i.e., to the earth below]? [Note: Of the three principal interpretations given to this verse: a) Christ descended to earth, b) Christ descended to the grave, c) Christ descended to Mary's womb, the first is to be preferred. See John 3:13; 6:38, 62]. 10) The One who descended [i.e., from heaven to earth] is the same One [i.e., Christ] who also ascended high above the all the heavens, so that He could fill the entire universe [with His presence]). 11) And He gave some people [the gift of being] apostles; and some people prophets; and some people evangelists; and some people pastors [i.e., elders] and teachers, 12) for the purpose of equipping the saints [i.e., God's holy people] for the work of serving [others], in order to build up the [spiritual] body of Christ [i.e., the church]. 13) [This is to be done] until we all [eventually] arrive at unity of the faith and full knowledge of the Son of God; at complete [spiritual] maturity; at the [full] height of Christ's [spiritual] stature. 14) Then we will no longer be [spiritual] babies, tossed back and forth [by waves], and blown around by every wind of [false] teaching, [deceived] by the clever trickery of people using deceptive schemes. 15) But [instead], we should speak [and practice] truth in a loving way, so that we can, in all respects, grow up [spiritually] into [union with] Christ, who is the head [i.e., of His body, the church]. 16) From Him all [members of] the body are properly joined together by every supporting ligament, as each part contributes to the growth of the body and builds itself up through [mutual] love.

17) So, I tell you this, and insist [on it] by [the authority of]

the Lord: Do not continue to live with worthless thoughts as [unconverted] Gentiles do. **18)** Their understanding [of spiritual things] is darkened and excluded from the [spiritual] life that God gives, because of the ignorance in their minds and the stubbornness in their hearts. **19)** They have stopped caring [i.e., about morality], so God has abandoned them to lives of unrestrained indecency and to engage in all kinds of [moral] impurity, with a constant desire for more.

20) But you people did not learn Christ that way [i.e., the above described life is not compatible with a commitment to Christ]. **21)** [I am] assuming that you have heard Him [i.e., through the Gospel message] and were taught the truth that is in [harmony with] Jesus. **22)** You were [taught] to put away [the conduct of] your former lifestyle, your old person who is being corrupted by deceitful desires, **23)** and to be renewed in your inner person. **24)** And you should put on the new person who has been [re-] created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

25) So then, put away lying and [Zech 8:16], "Each one should speak truthfully with his neighbor," because we are parts of one another [i.e., in the one body]. **26)** [Psa. 4:4 says], "Be angry [i.e., at wrongdoing. See Mark 3:5], but do not sin" [i.e., by harboring bitterness or retaliation]. Do not allow the sun to go down while you are still provoked. **27)** And do not give the devil an opportunity [to lead you into sin]. **28)** The person who has stolen must stop doing it; instead, he should work hard, doing something worthwhile with his own hands, so that he can have [money] to share with the person who needs it. **29)** Do not allow unwholesome [Note: The Greek word for "unwholesome" is "rotten, diseased"] language to come from your mouth, but only what is helpful for building up those who need it, so that you can impart favor [i.e., benefit] to those who listen [to you]. **30)** And do not grieve God's Holy Spirit by whom you were sealed [i.e., given evidence of God's ownership] until the day of redemption [i.e., until you receive your new body in heaven. See 1:14]. **31)** So, put away from you all [kinds of] bitterness and anger and wrath and brawling and slander, along with all [kinds of] malice [i.e., bad attitudes], **32)** and be kind and compassionate toward one another, forgiving each other, just as God also forgave you [because of your fellowship] in Christ.

CHAPTER FIVE

1) So, as dearly loved children, you people should [try to] be like God. 2) Live in a loving way, just like Christ loved us and gave Himself up [to die] for us as an offering and fragrant smelling sacrifice to God.

3) But you should not even talk about sexual immorality, or any type of [moral] impurity, or greed. [Note: Possibly "greed" here means "desire for more" of such things]. Such talk is not suitable for saints [i.e., God's holy people]. 4) Nor should obscenity, silly chatter or double-meaning jokes be used, because they are not proper either. But instead, [you should express] thanksgiving. 5) For you [should] know this for certain: No sexually immoral or [morally] impure person, or greedy person, who is [the same as] an idol worshiper, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6) Do not let anyone deceive you with empty words, for because of such things, the wrath of God will fall upon people who are disobedient [to Him]. 7) So, do not participate with such individuals, 8) for you people were once darkness [i.e., when living in sin], but now you are light in [fellowship with] the Lord. [So], live like people who belong to light [i.e., who live godly lives], 9) (for the product of light consists of everything good and right and true). 10) Then you will demonstrate [or, "learn about"] a life that is very pleasing to the Lord. 11) Do not have fellowship with [people who practice] worthless deeds of darkness [i.e., sinful living], but expose them instead. 12) For it is shameful even to talk about the things they do in private. 13) But when all [such] things are exposed by the light [i.e., the truth], they become [clearly] visible [i.e., their true nature is revealed], for everything so revealed becomes illuminated. [Note: Possibly this means "it is light that clearly reveals everything"]. 14) So, it says, "You who are asleep, wake up and rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you [i.e., illuminate you]." [Note: The foregoing words may have been an early saying, used at someone's immersion, which included the ideas of "rising up" (See Col. 2:12) and "illumination" (See Heb. 6:4)].

15) So, be careful how you live. Do not live ignorantly, but wisely, 16) making the most of every opportunity, because these days are evil. 17) Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. 18) And do not get drunk on wine, which results in ruined lives, but be filled with the Holy Spirit. 19) Speak to

one another by using psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your hearts to the Lord. **20)** Always give thanks to God the Father for everything in the name [i.e., by the authority] of our Lord Jesus Christ. **21)** Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22) Wives, you should submit to your own husbands, as you would to the Lord. **23)** For the husband is the [spiritual] head over his wife, just as Christ is also the [spiritual] head over the church, since He is the Savior of the body. **24)** But just as the church submits to Christ, so wives also should submit to their husbands in everything.

25) Husbands, you should love your wives just as Christ also loved the church, and gave up His life for her, **26)** so that He could dedicate her [to Himself], after cleansing her by means of the washing of water [i.e., immersion], accompanied by the word. [Note: "The word" here refers either to a person's profession of faith (See Rom. 10:9) or to the Gospel message (See Rom. 10:17), both of which are associated with immersion]. **27)** [This is] so He could present the church to Himself in all her splendor, without any kind of stain or wrinkle, but that she should be holy and without [moral] flaw. **28)** In the same way also, husbands should love their own wives as they love their own bodies. The man who loves his own wife [actually] loves himself. **29)** For no [normal] person ever hated his own [physical] body, but [instead] he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ also does for the church, **30)** because we are parts of His [spiritual] body. **31)** [Gen. 2:24 says], "For this reason a man will leave [the home of] his father and mother, and will cling to his wife, [so that] the two will become one flesh [i.e., united in such a close relationship, as to practically constitute one body]." **32)** The secret [truth] of this is great, but I am talking about Christ and the church. **33)** However, each of you men individually should also love his own wife the way he loves himself. And the wife should respect her husband.

CHAPTER SIX

1) Children, you should obey your parents in the Lord [i.e., as part of your Christian responsibility], for this is the right thing to do. **2)** [Ex. 20:12 says], "Show honor to your father and mother," (which is the first commandment that carries the promise), **3)** "that things may go well with you and that you will live a long time on

earth."

4) And you fathers [Note: This word probably includes both parents], do not stir up your children to become angry, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

5) Slaves, you should obey those who are your earthly masters, out of reverence and eagerness to please them, with a sincere heart, as you would [obey] Christ. **6)** Do not serve them only when you are being watched, just to gain their approval, but as slaves of Christ, doing what God wants from your heart. **7)** Render your service wholeheartedly, as you would to the Lord, and not [just] to people, **8)** knowing that whatever good deed a person does, he will be rewarded for it from the Lord, whether he is a slave or a free person.

9) And you masters should treat your slaves the same way; do not threaten them, knowing that God, who is both their Master and yours, is in heaven and He does not respect any particular person [over another].

10) Finally, be [spiritually] strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. **11)** You people should put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to withstand the devil's schemes. **12)** For our struggle is not [actually] against human beings, but against rulers and authorities and leaders of this world's darkness, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. [Note: "Heavenly realms" here refers to the struggle against Satanic powers which permeates life around us]. **13)** Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that you can withstand [the devil, See verse 10] when the evil day comes. And, after you have done everything you can, still remain standing firm [in the faith]. **14)** So, you people should stand firm [in the faith], with the belt of truth firmly buckled around you, and with the "flack jacket" of righteousness on your chest. **15)** And put on your shoes, ready to [go and] spread the Gospel of peace. **16)** And along with everything else, take up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the fire-tipped arrows of the evil one. **17)** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Holy Spirit, which is God's word. **18)** [Then] offer all kinds of prayers and requests in [harmony with] the Holy Spirit at all times, and be alert constantly in making requests for all the saints [i.e., God's holy people].

19) And [also pray] for me to be given boldness of speech in opening my mouth to make known the secret plan of the Gospel, **20)** for which I am an ambassador in prison. [And pray] that I may be

able to proclaim the Gospel boldly, as I ought to.

21) But, so that you people also can know how I am doing and what is going on with me, Tychicus, the dearly loved brother and faithful minister in [the service of] the Lord, will tell you everything.

22) I have sent [i.e., am sending] him to you for this very purpose, so you can know our situation and that he can encourage your hearts.

23) May there be peace and love, with faith, to the brothers [there] from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **24)** May God's unearned favor be upon all of those [there] who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

PHILIPPIANS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, [and is being sent] to all the saints [i.e., God's holy people] who are at Philippi [Note: This is a town in present-day northeastern Greece, and the first place in Europe where Paul established Christianity], along with the overseers [Note: These men were also called elders, shepherds or pastors] and deacons. 2) May unearned favor and peace be upon you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3) I thank my God [in prayer] every time I think of you. 4) In my every request for all of you, I make it with joy 5) for your sharing [with me] in [carrying on] the work of the Gospel from the first day [I left there] until now. [See 4:14-16]. 6) I am confident of this very thing, that God, who began something good among you, will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ's [return].

7) It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart [i.e., you are dear to me], for you people are sharing in God's unearned favor with me [Note: Paul here refers to his ministry], both in my imprisonment and in my defense and confirmation of the Gospel [i.e., in my efforts to give proof of the Gospel's truth]. 8) For God is my witness that I long to see you with the [same] affection that Christ Jesus has [for you].

9) And I pray that your love may grow stronger and stronger, [along] with how much you know, and [that you may grow] in your ability to comprehend things. 10) Then you will be able to approve of [only] what is best and be sincere and without just blame on the day of Christ's [return], 11) having been full of qualities of righteousness, which come from Jesus Christ and produce honor and praise to God.

12) Now I want you to know, brothers, that the things that happened to me have resulted in the advancement [of the influence] of the Gospel rather [than hindering it], 13) so that my imprisonment for Christ became known throughout the entire headquarters of the governor [i.e., among all his personnel], and to everyone else. 14) And most of the brothers in the Lord's [service], through my

imprisonment, gained confidence to speak out God's message with greater courage and without fear. **15)** Some people, indeed, are proclaiming Christ out of envy and strife [i.e., out of rivalry], while others do it from good will. **16)** Those who do it out of love [for me] know that I am prepared to defend the Gospel [i.e., before government authorities]. **17)** But the others preach Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely, hoping to stir up trouble for me while I am in prison. **18)** So, what [should I think about the situation]? Just this: I am happy and will continue to be happy that, in every way, Christ is being preached, [regardless of] whether it is in pretense or with sincerity. **19)** For I know that, through your requests [in prayer] for me and the help provided by the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, this situation will result in my being rescued [i.e., released from imprisonment]. **20)** It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not have to be ashamed about anything, but that I will have the courage, [both] now and always, [to so live] that Christ will be exalted [i.e., honored] in my body, whether I live or die. **21)** For life to me is Christ, and if I die, it would be gain. **22)** But if [continuing] to live in my body means accomplishing more work [for Christ], then I do not know which to choose. **23)** So, I am in a dilemma between the two choices. [On the one hand] I have the desire to depart [from this life] and be with Christ [in heaven], which would be far better. **24)** Yet [on the other hand], to remain in my body is more necessary for your sakes. **25)** So, being convinced of this, I know I will remain [in my body] and continue with all of you for your spiritual progress and joy in the faith, **26)** so that, by my being with you again, you will be able to rejoice all the more in [our lives together with] Christ Jesus.

27) So, [whatever happens], live your daily lives in such a way as to be worthy of the Gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or remain absent from you, I will hear about you, that you are standing firm in one spirit [i.e., united in purpose, and] contending with one mind for the faith of the Gospel [i.e., for the body of Christian teaching]. **28)** [I also want to hear] that you are not being frightened by those who oppose you, which [opposition] is proof that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved, and this will [all] be done by God. **29)** Because God has granted you [the privilege], on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. **30)** [So], you are now experiencing the same struggle you [once] saw me going through, and now are hearing that

I still am.

CHAPTER TWO

1) Is there anything to be encouraged about by being in [fellowship with] Christ? Is there any comfort from His love? Is there any sharing with the Holy Spirit? [Have you received] any affection and compassion [from Christ]? 2) [Then] make me completely happy by being like-minded, having the same love [for one another], being united in spirit and having the same purpose. 3) Do not do anything from rivalry or from empty conceit, but in humility, consider others better than yourselves. 4) Each of you should not look out for your own interests [only], but also for those of other people.

5) You should think about things the way Christ Jesus did. 6) He existed in the form of God [i.e., He shared God's very nature], but did not consider [remaining] equal with God something [to continue]P to hold onto. 7) Instead, He gave up what He had and took on the form [i.e., the nature] of a slave, becoming like a man, [and even] His appearance was found to be like a man's. 8) He humbled Himself [by] becoming obedient [to God] to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9) Therefore, God also exalted Him to the highest position and gave Him the name [i.e., "Lord." See verse 11], which is superior to every [other] name. 10) [This was] so that, in [honor of] the name of Jesus, everyone's knee in heaven, on earth and under the earth [i.e., all rational creatures] should bow [i.e., before God], 11) and that everyone's mouth should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12) So then, my dear ones, just as you people were always obedient [to my teaching] when I was there with you, so now, in my absence [also], be [obedient] all the more. [Continue to] complete your own salvation [i.e., by living faithfully to the end. See Rom. 13:11] with fear and trembling [i.e., with a reverent and submissive spirit], 13) for it is God who is at work in you, both to motivate the desire and to carry out what pleases Him.

14) Do everything without complaining and arguing, 15) so that you will be without just blame and innocent [of wrongdoing], children of God without fault in the middle of a crooked and perverted generation of people. You must shine among them like stars

lighting up the sky, **16)** as you hold out [i.e., offer to people] the message of [never ending] life. Then I will have something to boast about on the day of Christ's [return, See 1:6], that I had not run the race for nothing nor had worked for nothing. **17)** But even if I am poured out like a drink offering [See Ex. 29:38-41] on the sacrifice and service produced by your faith, I am glad and will rejoice with all of you. [Note: Paul here likens the possible pouring out of his blood to the wine and oil of the Old Testament sacrifice, which is then likened to the Philippians' faithful service to God]. **18)** And you should be glad and share your joy with me also.

19) But I hope in [harmony with the wishes of] the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I could be encouraged when I learn of your situation [i.e., when Timothy returns with news from Philippi]. **20)** For I do not have anyone else [i.e., as a fellow-worker] who thinks the same way I do, and who will genuinely care for your [spiritual and material] needs. **21)** For everyone else is looking out for his own interests, not for those of Jesus Christ. **22)** But you people know about his proven reliability, how he served with me in advancing [the work of] the Gospel just like a son working with his father. **23)** So, I hope to send him [to you] as soon as I see how things will go with me. **24)** But I am fully persuaded in [harmony with the wishes of] the Lord that I, myself, also will go to you soon. [Note: Paul here expresses the hope of being released from imprisonment, in spite of previous hints that he might be put to death. See 1:20; 2:17].

25) But I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger [to me] and minister to my needs. **26)** For he longed to see all of you and was very distressed because you had heard that he was sick. **27)** And indeed, he was [so] sick that he almost died, but God had pity on him, and not only on him but also on me, so that I would not have one sorrow on top of another. **28)** So, I am all the more eager to send him to you people, so that when you see him again you will be glad, and that my sorrow will be lessened [i.e., in knowing that you are relieved to see that he is well again]. **29)** So, you should welcome him in [the fellowship of] the Lord with great joy, and regard such people with honor, **30)** because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to provide me with what you were not able to.

CHAPTER THREE

1) Finally, my brothers, rejoice in [your relationship to] the Lord. It does not trouble me to write the same things to you again, because you will be safer if I do. [Note: These "same things" may refer to warnings against false teachers which Paul had either spoken to them or written about previously].

2) Watch out for the "dogs!" [Note: "Dogs" were viewed with disgust by the ancient Jews (Deut. 23:18; II Kings 8:13; Rev. 22:15), so the term is used here derogatorily for Jewish Christians who were trying to impose on the church the requirements of the law of Moses]. Watch out for the evil workers! Watch out for those who mutilate the body meaninglessly! [Note: Paul here alludes, in a derogatory wordplay, to the Jewish practice of circumcision]. 3) For we [Christians] are the [true] circumcision [i.e., the real "Jews" in God's eyes. See Rom. 2:28-29]. We worship by means of God's Holy Spirit [i.e., are empowered and motivated by the Holy Spirit], and boast in [the person and work of] Christ Jesus, and [we] place no confidence in the flesh [i.e., in any outward ritual or status for salvation]. 4) However I, myself, have [reasons for such] confidence in the flesh. [But] if any other person has [reasons for placing] confidence in the flesh, I have more [reasons]. 5) [I was] circumcised eight days after I was born; [I am] from the nation of Israelites; from the tribe of Benjamin and of Hebrew ancestry [i.e., an outstanding Hebrew]. As far as the law of Moses is concerned, [I am] a Pharisee [i.e., a strict sect of the Jewish religion]. 6) As far as enthusiasm is concerned, I persecuted the church; as far as being righteous according to the law of Moses is concerned, I was without just blame. 7) However, those things which were [once regarded as] gain to me, I have [now] considered to be loss for [the sake of] Christ. 8) What is more, I consider everything to be a loss compared to the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus [as] my Lord, for whose sake I have suffered the loss of all things. [I now] consider [all of] them to be trash, in order to gain Christ 9) and to be found in [fellowship with] Him, not having a righteousness of my own, acquired by observing the law of Moses, but one acquired through believing in Christ. This righteousness, which comes from God, is based on faith. 10) I want to know Christ [as Savior] and to experience the power [produced] by His resurrection, and to share in His sufferings and become like Him in His death, 11) in order to, somehow, be raised out of the dead [i.e., to have never ending life]. 12) [It is] not that I have already arrived at the goal [of spiritual

maturity], or have already been made perfectly [righteous], but I am pushing onward in order to take hold of what Christ Jesus took hold of me for [i.e., to receive all that Christ intended for me]. 13) Brothers, I consider that I, myself, have not yet taken hold [of Christ's ultimate purpose for me]. But there is one thing that I am doing; I am forgetting about my past [See verses 5-7], and reaching forward to what lies ahead. 14) I am pushing onward toward the goal for the prize of the upward call [i.e., to heaven] from God in [fellowship with] Christ. 15) So, all of us who are mature [Christians] should think this way. And if you people think differently about anything, God will reveal that to you also. 16) So, we should continue living by the same [standard] that we have [already] attained.

17) Brothers, you people should join together in imitating me, and take note of those who are following my example. 18) For I have often told you before, and am telling you again with tears in my eyes, that many people are living as the enemies of the cross of Christ [i.e., their lives oppose the purpose of Christ's death]. 19) Their [ultimate] end is [spiritual] destruction; their god is their appetite; they boast of what they ought to be ashamed of, and they [constantly] think about worldly things. 20) But we are [really] citizens of heaven and we are waiting for a Savior [to return] from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21) who will change our lowly [physical] bodies and make them like His glorious body. [He will do this] according to the power that enables Him even to bring everything into submission to Himself.

CHAPTER FOUR

1) So, my dearly loved brothers, those whom I long to see, [who are] my [reason for] being glad and [who are] my crown of victory; stand firm in [your devotion] to] the Lord, my dear ones.

2) I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be like-minded in [fellowship with] the Lord. 3) Yes, and I am asking you also, [my] faithful partner [Note: This person is unknown, but may have been one of Paul's preacher companions], help those women, for they have worked hard with me in [spreading] the Gospel, along with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life. [See Rev. 3:5; Heb. 12:23].

4) Rejoice in [fellowship with] the Lord all the time. I will

say it again: Rejoice! **5)** You should let your gentleness be known to all people. The Lord is near. [Note: This "nearness" could refer to Christ's second coming or to His nearness to His people in a spiritual sense]. **6)** Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and [special] petition, along with thanksgivings, you should make your requests known to God. **7)** And [when you do], the peace from God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and thoughts [from anxiety] in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus.

8) Finally, brothers, give [careful] thought to these things: Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovable, whatever is commendable. If it is excellent; if it is praiseworthy; [think about it]. **9)** You people should do those things which you have learned and received and heard from me, and seen in me, and [then] the God [who gives] peace will be with you.

10) I am rejoicing very much in [fellowship with] the Lord that now, after some time, you people have revived your concern for me. Actually, you were concerned, but lacked the opportunity [to show it]. **11)** I am not saying this because of being in need, for I have learned to be content regardless of my circumstances. **12)** I know how to get along in humble circumstances and how to live in prosperity. In every situation and in all circumstances, I have learned the secret both to be full and to be hungry, both to have plenty and to be in need. **13)** I can do everything through Christ, who gives me the strength. **14)** Nevertheless, it was really good of you people to share [with me] during my troubles [i.e., imprisonment]. **15)** As you Philippians also know, during the early days of [my] preaching the Gospel [in those regions], when I left Macedonia [Note: This was the northernmost province of Greece], no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving [i.e., financial help], except you only. **16)** For even [when I was] in Thessalonica, you sent [money] more than once to meet my needs. **17)** [Now] it is not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for the benefit that [such a gift] will add to your [spiritual] account [with God]. **18)** But I have everything [I need], and in abundance; I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts that you sent, [which are like] a fragrant-smelling sacrifice, acceptable and very pleasing to God. **19)** And my God will supply all your needs [also], according to His glorious wealth [enjoyed by fellowship] in Christ Jesus.

20) Now may there be honor to our God and Father forever

and ever. May it be so.

21) Greet every saint [i.e., God's holy person] in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me [also] send their greetings to you. **22)** All the saints [here with me] send you their greetings, especially those belonging to [Emperor] Caesar's household.

23) May the unearned favor of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

COLOSSIANS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and [from] our brother Timothy, 2) [and is being sent] to the saints [i.e., God's holy people] and faithful brothers in [fellowship with] Christ [who live] at Colosse. May you have unearned favor and peace from God our Father.

3) Whenever we pray for you, we always thank God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 4) for we have heard about [the evidence of] your faith in [the service of] Christ Jesus, and about the love you have [shown] for all the saints. 5) [You have these qualities] because of the hope stored up for you in heaven, which [hope] you previously heard about through the message of truth when the Gospel 6) came to you. This Gospel is [now] also producing fruit all over the world [i.e., throughout the Roman Empire] and growing [in its influence], just as it is doing among you people also, since the day you [first] heard and understood God's unearned favor in [all its] truth. 7) You learned [this truth] from Epaphras, our dearly loved fellow-slave, who is a faithful minister of Christ [to you] on our behalf. 8) He also told us about your love, [which is produced] by the Holy Spirit.

9) So, this is why, since the day we heard about these things, we do not stop praying for you and requesting that you people be filled [by God] with the knowledge of what He wants [for your lives], and with spiritual wisdom and understanding. 10) [We pray for you] to live a life deserving of the Lord, pleasing to Him in every way, producing fruit in every good deed and growing in the knowledge of God. 11) [We also pray that you will be] strengthened with great power, according to God's glorious might, so that you will have great endurance and patience [coupled] with joy. 12) [May you] give thanks to the Father who has enabled you to share [i.e., eventually] in the inheritance of the saints [i.e., God's holy people] in [the kingdom of] light. 13) He rescued us from the domain of [spiritual] darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son whom He loves, 14) through whom we receive redemption [i.e., are bought back from Satan], which is the forgiveness of [our] sins. 15) He is the image of

the invisible God, the firstborn One [i.e., who takes preeminence] over all that is created. **16)** For all things were created by Him; things in heaven and on earth; things visible and invisible, whether they are thrones [i.e., reigning beings], or lords, or rulers or authorities. [Note: "Authorities" here may refer to angelic beings]. All things were created by Him and for Him. **17)** And He existed before all things and all things are held together by Him. **18)** And He is the head of the [spiritual] body, the church. He is [its] source, the firstborn One from the dead [i.e., the first one to return to life, never to die again], so that He could rank first [in importance] over all things. **19)** For God was very pleased to have all of [His] fullness dwell in Christ [See 2:9], **20)** and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven. He made peace [with mankind] through the [sacrificial] blood of Christ's [death on the] cross.

21) And though you were once estranged [from God] and were enemies [of His] in your mind because of your evil deeds, **22)** yet now God has reconciled [you] to Himself through the death of Christ's physical body in order to present you holy, without fault and free from just blame before Him [on judgment day]. **23)** [This will happen] if you continue in the faith [Note: This means either "continue to observe God's teaching" or, "continue to believe"], firmly grounded and established, and not moved away from the hope offered by the Gospel message, which you have heard and which was preached to people throughout the entire created world under heaven. I, Paul, was made a minister of this Gospel.

24) Now I rejoice in [spite of] my sufferings for your sake, and I am filling up [i.e., completing] in my physical body what was lacking in the afflictions Christ endured for His body's sake, the church. **25)** I was made a minister of the church according to the task given to me by God to fully present His message to you. **26)** [This message is] the secret which has been kept hidden throughout the ages and generations, but has now been revealed to God's saints [i.e., His holy people]. **27)** He was pleased to make known to these people the wealth of His splendor among the Gentiles; this hidden secret, which is Christ among you, [is] the hope of being honored [i.e., in heaven]. **28)** We proclaim Him, warning and teaching every person with all wisdom, so that we may present every person [to God] complete in [their fellowship with] Christ. **29)** This is the reason that I work hard and struggle also, using God's mighty power which is at

work in me.

CHAPTER TWO

1) I want you to know how much I am struggling for you [Note: This probably refers to the great effort Paul was exerting in prayer, preaching, etc.], and for those at Laodicia [Note: This was a town ten miles west of Colosse], and for all those who have never met me in person. 2) [I do this] so that their hearts will be encouraged [while] being united in [mutual] love, [and] so that they will have the wealth of a fully assured understanding, in order to fully know about God's hidden secret, [which is] Christ. 3) In Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. 4) I say this so that no one will deceive you with persuasive arguments. 5) For even though I am absent [from you] in body, still I am present with you in spirit, rejoicing and observing [i.e., with my mind's eye] your orderly behavior and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

6) So, since you have accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, live in [fellowship with] Him, 7) rooted and built up in [your relationship to] Him, established by your faith [or, "in the faith"], just as you were taught, overflowing with thanksgiving.

8) Pay attention so that no one takes you [spiritually] captive through his philosophy and empty deception based on human tradition, according to the principles of the world and not according to Christ. 9) For all of the fullness of Deity lives in His body, 10) and you people have been made full [i.e., spiritually complete] in [fellowship with] Him, who is the [spiritual] head over all who rule and have authority. 11) In [fellowship with] Him you people were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human beings, but performed by Christ, consisting of the removal of the body of [sinful] flesh. 12) [This happened when you were] buried with Christ in [the act of] immersion, from which you were also raised up with Him through [your] faith in the accomplishment of God, who raised Him up from the dead. 13) And when you were [spiritually] dead because of your sins and your lack of being physically circumcised [Note: This refers to their having been unconverted Gentiles and therefore outside of a relationship with God], God made you alive [again] together with Christ, having forgiven us for all of our sins. 14) He canceled the document written in ordinances [Note: This obviously refers to the Mosaic law] that was

against us and was opposed to us, and has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. **15)** [In doing this] Christ disarmed the rulers and authorities [i.e., evil forces] and made a public display of them, triumphing over them through the cross. [Note: This could possibly be rendered "God triumphed over them through Christ"].

16) So, do not allow anyone to judge [i.e., condemn] you for what you eat, or what you drink, or regarding [your non-observance of] a [yearly] festival, or a [monthly] "new moon" observance, or a [weekly] Sabbath day. **17)** These things are [only] a shadow of future things, but the body [i.e., the real substance of things] belongs to Christ. [Note: The idea here is that the ritual observances of the Mosaic law were like shadows pointing to the reality of life in Christ]. **18)** Do not allow anyone, who delights in acting humble [i.e., living an ascetic life] and who worships angels, to rob you of your reward [in heaven]. [Note: This "angel worship" could mean holding angels in high regard because of their role as God's messengers, or the claim that God can be approached only through angelic intermediaries]. He places great importance on what he [claims to] see [i.e., visions], being inflated with pride by his fleshly mind for no [good] reason. **19)** He is not holding on [firmly] to the head [i.e., Christ, the head of the church], from whom the entire body, being nourished and supported by its ligaments and joints, is caused to grow in size by God.

20) Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of the world, [then] why, as though you [still] lived in [harmony with] the world, do you submit yourselves to [its] rules, [such as]: **21)** "Do not handle [this]; do not taste [that]; do not touch [those things]?" **22)** (All these things [i.e., the things handled, tasted or touched] are destined to perish with [constant] use). [These rules are] based on the commands and teachings of men. **23)** They certainly have an appearance of wisdom, [displaying] self-prescribed worship and [false] humility and asceticism, but they lack any value in curbing the desires of the physical passions.

CHAPTER THREE

1) If then you people have been raised up together with Christ [i.e., from your burial in immersion, See verses 12-13 with Rom. 6:4], pay attention to the things that are above [i.e., heavenly things], where Christ is seated at the right side of God. **2)** Focus your minds on the things that are above, not on earthly things. **3)** For you died

[with Christ, See 2:20], and your life is [now] hidden with Christ in [fellowship with] God. 4) [So], when Christ, who is your [or, "our" source of] life, appears [i.e., at His second coming], then you people also will appear with Him in splendor [i.e., in heaven].

5) So, put to death [i.e., stop practicing the desires of] your physical bodies [such as] sexual immorality, [moral] impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is [in reality] idolatry. 6) For the wrath of God will come [upon disobedient people] for practicing such things. 7) You people also once lived like this when you practiced these things. 8) But now you also should stop practicing them: anger, wrath, malice, slander, filthy language from your mouth. 9) Do not lie to one another, since you have put away [the conduct of] your old person with its practices, 10) and have put on the new person, who is being [daily] renewed with full knowledge, according to the image of God, who [re-] created him. 11) [In this state] there cannot be [such distinctions as] Greek [i.e., Gentile] and Jew; circumcised people and non-circumcised people; barbarian and Scythian [Note: These last two words refer to a foreigner whose language was unintelligible and to an uncivilized heathen], OR slave and free person; but Christ is all [that is important] and [He is] in all [of His people].

12) So, as God's elect [i.e., His people], holy and dearly loved [by Him], clothe yourselves with a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13) Tolerate one another's [weaknesses] and forgive each other if anyone [of you] has a complaint against someone else. You should forgive people just as the Lord forgave you. 14) And beyond all these things, clothe yourselves with love, which binds these things together in complete [unity].

15) You should let the peace given by Christ rule in your hearts, since you people were called [to be at peace] in one body [i.e., the church]; and you should be thankful. 16) You should let the message of Christ live in you abundantly [i.e., as individuals and collectively]. Use [much] wisdom in teaching and warning one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with favor [i.e., with thankfulness] in your hearts toward God. 17) And whatever you do, whether in [your] words or actions, do everything in the name [i.e., by the authority] of Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

18) You wives should submit to your husbands, as this is

proper in [the fellowship of] the Lord.

19) You husbands should love your wives and not be harsh toward them.

20) You children should obey your parents in everything, for this is very pleasing to the Lord.

21) You fathers [Note: By implication, this would include both parents] should not stir up your children [i.e., irritate or exasperate them], so that they do not become discouraged.

22) You slaves should obey your earthly masters in everything, [and] do not do it just when they are looking [at you], or to gain their favor, but do it with a sincere heart, out of reverence for the Lord. **23)** In whatever you do, work wholeheartedly, as though it were for the Lord and not [just] for people, **24)** knowing that you will receive from the Lord a [spiritual] inheritance as a reward, [for] you are [really] serving the Lord. **25)** And the person who does what is wrong will be repaid for his wrongdoing, for there is no favoritism [with God].

CHAPTER FOUR

1) You masters should treat your slaves in a just and fair way, knowing that you also have a Master [who] is in heaven.

2) Continue to pray regularly; stay alert and be thankful. **3)** At the same time, pray for us also, that God will open up a door [of opportunity] for [proclaiming] the message, so we can tell about the [previously] hidden secret of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned. **4)** [Pray] that I will make it [clearly] known, as I ought to. **5)** Be wise in the way you live in front of outsiders [i.e., non-Christians], making the most of every opportunity. **6)** Your speech should always be favorable, seasoned with salt [i.e., interesting and appropriate], so that you may know how to properly answer each person [you talk with].

7) Tychicus will tell you all about my affairs. [Note: This man probably delivered this letter as well as the one to the Ephesians. See Eph. 6:21]. He is our dearly loved brother and faithful minister and fellow-slave in [the service of] the Lord. **8)** I have sent [i.e., am sending] him to you for this very purpose, so that you can know our situation and that he can encourage your hearts. **9)** [He is coming], together with Onesimus our

faithful and dearly loved brother, who is one of you. [Note: This could mean either "from your town" or, "a fellow-Christian"]. They will tell you about everything that is happening here.

10) Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner, sends you his greetings, along with Barnabas' cousin [John] Mark. [See Acts 12:12]. (You have received instructions to welcome Mark if he comes to you). **11)** Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends his greetings. These men are the only Jews among my fellow-workers for God's kingdom; they have proved to be an encouragement to me. **12)** Epaphras, who is one of you [See 1:7; 4:9], a slave of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always struggles in his prayers on your behalf so that you will remain mature and be fully convinced [that you are living] by all that God wants [for your life]. **13)** For I testify about Epaphras, that he has worked hard for you, and [also] for those people in Laodicia and Hierapolis. [Note: These are towns close to Colosse]. **14)** Luke, my dearly loved physician, and Demas [See II Tim. 4:10] send you their greetings. **15)** Greet the brothers who are at Laodicia, and Nympha, along with the church that meets in her house.

16) And when this letter has been read to you people, see that it is read in the church of the Laodicians also. And see that you read the letter [coming] from Laodicia also. [Note: This could have been a reference to the letter to the Ephesians].

17) And tell Archippus [Note: He may have been the preacher at Colosse or Laodicia. See Philemon 1:1-2], "See to it that you fulfill your ministry [there], which you have received in [the service of] the Lord."

18) This greeting [is being written] by me, Paul, in my own handwriting. Remember my imprisonment. [Note: This was probably a request for them to pray for him]. May God's unearned favor be with you.

I THESSALONIANS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] Paul, and Silvanus and Timothy, [and is being sent] to the church of the Thessalonians [Note: This was a town in present-day northeastern Greece] in [fellowship with] God, the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. May God's unearned favor and peace be upon you.

2) We always thank God for all of you, [regularly] mentioning you in our prayers. 3) We continually remember, in the presence of our God and Father, the work produced by your faith, the labor prompted by your love, and your endurance motivated by your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

4) We know, my brothers who are dearly loved by God, about your election [i.e., that you were chosen by God because of your obedient faith], 5) for our Gospel came to you, not merely in words, but also in power, in [a demonstration of] the Holy Spirit [See I Cor. 2:4] and with ["our" or "your"] deep conviction [of its truth]. You people know what kind of men we were while living among you for your benefit. 6) And you became imitators of us and of the Lord. [And even though] you suffered much affliction, you welcomed the message with joy [given to you] by the Holy Spirit, 7) and so became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. [Note: These two provinces make up present-day Greece]. 8) For the Lord's message sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith toward God [also] spread everywhere [else], so that we do not have to say anything [about you]. 9) For those people themselves report on what kind of a reception we had from you, and how you people turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God. 10) And [they tell how you are] waiting for His Son [to come] from heaven, the One He raised up from the dead --- this Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath [of God].

CHAPTER TWO

1) For you brothers [should] know that our coming to you was not a waste of time. 2) But [even though] we had already suffered

and been mistreated at Philippi [See Acts 16:19-24], as you people know, we had the boldness, [with help] from God, to tell you His message in spite of much struggle [i.e., opposition]. **3)** For our appeal [to you was] not based on error, or impure [motives], or deception. **4)** Instead, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel. So, we speak, not trying to please people but God, who examines [the motives of] our hearts. **5)** For we were never found using flattering words at any time, as you know, nor did we try to cover up any greedy desires. God can testify [to this]. **6)** [And] we were not looking for honor from people, either from you or from anyone else, even though, as apostles of Christ, we could have become a burden [to you]. [Note: The idea seems to be that the apostles could have claimed financial support, but chose not to]. **7)** But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother caring for her children. **8)** And so, since we have such deep affection for you, we were very pleased to share with you, not only the Gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. **9)** For you brothers remember how we labored and toiled, working hard night and day, so that we would not burden any of you [while] we proclaimed to you the Gospel of God.

10) You can testify, [just] as God can, how holy, righteous and blameless our conduct was toward you believers. **11)** For you know that we treated each one of you like a father treats his own children, exhorting you, and comforting you, **12)** and urging you to live up to the standards of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and splendor.

13) And because of this we also thank God continually that, when you people received the message of God, which you heard from us, you did not accept it as a message from [mere] human beings, but as it truly is, the message from God, which is at work in you believers. **14)** For you brothers became imitators of the churches of God in Judea, which are in [fellowship with] Christ, for you people also suffered the same things from your own countrymen that they did from the Jews, **15)** who killed the Lord Jesus and the [Old Testament] prophets and also drove us [apostles] out [of Thessalonica and Berea. See Acts 17]. They are not pleasing to God and are hostile to all people, **16)** for they [even] try to prevent us from speaking to the Gentiles, so that they can be saved. [In doing this] they are always piling up one sin on another. But the wrath [of God] has come upon them at last [or, "completely"].

17) But brothers, after we were separated from you for a short time --- in person but not in spirit --- we became all the more eager [to come to you] and strongly desired to see you in person. [Note: The word "separated" here denotes the traumatic experience of a child being forcibly removed from its parents. It had been about six months since Paul left Thessalonica under adverse circumstances]. 18) For we [really] wanted to come to you [and] I, Paul, [even tried to come] more than once, but Satan prevented us. [Note: This was probably accomplished through the influence of certain people or circumstances]. 19) For what is [the basis of] our hope, or joy, or crown of honor in the presence of the Lord Jesus when He comes back? [Note: By "crown" Paul alludes to the laurel wreath awarded to the victor in an athletic contest]. Will it not be you people? 20) For you people are [indeed] our [occasion for] honor and joy.

CHAPTER THREE

1) So, when we could not stand it any longer [Note: Paul's concern for the spiritual well-being of the Thessalonian Christians became unbearable], we [i.e., I, See verse 5] thought it best to be left behind, alone, at Athens [Note: Paul was willing to labor alone at Athens, so he could send his fellow-workers to minister to others. See Acts 17], 2) and so we [i.e., I] sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow-worker in [the ministry of] the Gospel, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, 3) so that no one would be shaken by [having to experience] these difficult times. [See 2:14]. For you yourselves know that we are destined to have such experiences. 4) For even when we were with you, we warned you that we were going to be persecuted, and as you know, it has turned out that way. 5) [So], for this reason, when I could not stand it any longer, I also sent [Timothy] to find out about your faith. I was afraid that somehow the tempter [i.e., Satan] had tempted you [to give up] and that our work [on your behalf] will have become useless.

6) But now Timothy has returned to us from you and brought us good news about your faith and love, and [reported] that you have good memories of us. [He told us that you are] longing to see us, just as we also long to see you. 7) So, brothers, through all of our distress and persecution, we were encouraged over you because of your faith, 8) for now we [really] live, if you [continue to] stand firm in [the service of] the Lord [i.e., Paul could enjoy life much more in knowing that the Thessalonians were living for the Lord faithfully]. 9) For how

can we thank God [enough] for you, in return for all the joy we have over you, in the presence of our God? 10) Night and day we pray very earnestly that we will be able to see you in person, so we can provide what is lacking in your faith.

11) Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, open the way for us to go to you. 12) And may the Lord cause your love for one another, and for everyone, to increase and overflow, just as ours does for you also. 13) May the Lord strengthen your hearts so you will be [found] without just blame and holy, in the presence of our God and Father, when our Lord Jesus Christ returns with all of His holy ones [i.e., angels. See Mark 8:38; II Thess. 1:7].

CHAPTER FOUR

1) Finally then, brothers, we request and urge you, in [the fellowship of] the Lord, that you should live [dedicated lives] and please God. Just as you people received direction from us [on doing this], see that you [continue to] do it more and more. 2) For you know [i.e., are aware of] the instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

3) For it is God's will that you should be dedicated to Him, [that is], you should avoid sexual immorality. 4) Each of you should know how to control his own body in a dedicated and honorable way, 5) not in passionate lust, as the [unconverted] Gentiles, who do not know God, do. 6) And none of you should violate and exploit his brother [or sister] in such a matter. For the Lord will punish people for all these things, just as we told you before and warned you. 7) For God did not call us to be morally impure, but to be dedicated to Him. 8) So, the person who rejects [this exhortation] is not [merely] rejecting what man says but God [Himself], who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

9) Now you people do not need anyone to write to you about loving [your] brothers, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another. 10) For you certainly do practice it toward all the brothers [and sisters] throughout Macedonia. [Note: This was the province in which Thessalonica was located]. Yet we urge you, brothers, to continue doing it more and more.

11) [We also urge you to] make it your aim to live a quiet

life, and to attend to your own business matters, and to work with your hands, as we urged you. [Note: Possibly this exhortation was directed toward the tendency of some people there to neglect ordinary responsibilities in view of an imminent return of Christ]. **12)** [Do these things] so that you will live in a proper way in front of outsiders [i.e., non-Christians], and not have [to depend on people for] any needs.

13) But we want you to be informed, brothers, concerning those who have fallen asleep [in death] so that you do not grieve, as other people do [i.e., the unsaved], who have no hope. **14)** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again [from the dead], [we also believe] that God will bring [back to life], along with Jesus, those in [fellowship with] Him who have fallen asleep [in death]. **15)** For we say this to you by [the authority of] the word of the Lord [Note: Paul was either quoting what Jesus had previously said, or was giving a revelation he had received from the Lord. See I Cor. 14:37], that we [Christians] who are [still] alive, who are left [on earth] when the Lord returns, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. [Note: The point Paul is making is that the living will not be "changed" (I Cor. 15:51-52) and taken to heaven before the dead are raised]. **16)** For the Lord Himself [i.e., Jesus] will come down from heaven with a commanding shout [Note: This probably refers to Jesus' voice. See John 5:25, 28], [and] with the archangel's voice [i.e., Michael. See Jude 9] and with the sound of God's trumpet; [at this] the dead in [fellowship with] Christ will rise [from the dead] first. **17)** Then, we who [will still] be alive, that are left, will be caught up together with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so [from then on] we will always be with the Lord. **18)** So, encourage one another with these words.

CHAPTER FIVE

1) Now brothers, you do not need to have anything written to you about the times and dates [i.e., of Christ's second coming], **2)** for you know perfectly well that the day of the Lord [i.e., when He returns, See II Thess. 2:1-2] will arrive like a thief coming in the night. **3)** [For] when people are saying, "Peace," and "Safety," then [is when] destruction will come upon them suddenly, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not be able to escape it. **4)** But you brothers are not in the dark about that day, so that it sneaks up on you like a thief, **5)** for all of you people belong to the light; you

belong to the daytime. We do not belong to the night or to darkness. [Note: In this passage "light" and "daytime" refer to spiritual illumination, while "darkness" and "night" refer to spiritual ignorance]. 6) So then, we should not be [spiritually] asleep, like the rest [i.e., the unsaved world], but we should be alert and sober [i.e., in control of our senses]. 7) For people sleep at night, and get drunk at night [i.e., generally speaking]. 8) But, since we belong to the daytime [i.e., are enlightened], we should be sober. We should put on the "flack jacket" of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of being saved. 9) For God did not appoint us to [suffer His] wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ 10) who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep [i.e., alive or dead], we could live together with Him. 11) Therefore, [continue to] encourage one another, and build each other up [spiritually], just as you are also doing.

12) But we urge you, brothers, to know [i.e., appreciate and respect] those who work hard among you, and who lead you and warn you in [the fellowship of] the Lord. [Note: These men were probably the elders. See Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17]. 13) And regard them very highly, in a loving way, because of the work they do. You should live at peace with one another. 14) And we urge you, brothers, to warn those who are idle [Note: The word "idle" originally meant, "insubordinate, or unruly." See II Thess. 3:6-7, 11], encourage those who are timid, help the [spiritually] weak and be patient with everyone. 15) Make sure that no one does anything wrong to someone who wrongs him, but always look for something good you can do for one another and for everyone.

16) You should be joyful at all times. 17) Never stop praying. 18) Thank [God] for everything, for this is what God wants for you in [the fellowship of] Christ Jesus. 19) Do not squelch the [influence of the] Holy Spirit [in your lives]. 20) Do not look down on prophetic messages. 21) Put everything [i.e., speakers and their messages] to the test, [then] hold onto what is good. 22) Avoid [the practice of] every kind of evil.

23) And may God Himself, who gives peace, dedicate you completely, and may your spirit, soul and body [i.e., your entire person] be kept without just blame at [i.e., until] the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24) God, who calls you [into His fellowship] is faithful; He will also do [what He promises]. 25) Brothers, pray for us.

26) Greet all of the brothers [and sisters] with a holy kiss

[i.e., to signify affection, yet without sensuality]. **27)** I am ordering you, by [the authority of] the Lord, that this letter be read to all the brothers.

28) May the unearned favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

II THESSALONIANS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, [and is being sent] to the church of the Thessalonians in [fellowship with] God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2) May you have unearned favor and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3) We ought to thank God for you always, brothers, since it is proper, because your faith is growing so much and the love that every one of you has for each other is increasing more and more. 4) Therefore, we ourselves speak proudly about you among the churches of God because of your steadfastness and faith amid all the persecutions and afflictions that you are enduring. 5) The way you are faithfully enduring [such] suffering for the kingdom of God is clear evidence that God's judgment is right in [eventually] counting you worthy of it [i.e., of entering the eternal phase of the kingdom]. 6) For it is a just thing for God to repay with affliction those people who are troubling you, 7) and to provide [future] rest for you, along with us, who are afflicted. [This will occur] when Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire [i.e., at His second coming], accompanied by His mighty angels. 8) He will inflict punishment on those people who do not know God [as Savior], and on those who do not obey the Gospel message of our Lord Jesus. 9) They will pay the penalty of never ending destruction, being banished from the presence of the Lord and from His mighty splendor. 10) On that day Jesus will return to be honored by His saints [i.e., God's holy people] and to be marvelled at [i.e., in reverence] by all those who had believed [in Him]. [This will happen] because you have believed our testimony to you [about Christ].

11) This is why we always pray for you also, so that our God will consider you worthy to be [i.e., to have been] called [into the kingdom] by Him, and will fulfill, by His power, every good purpose [or, "desire for goodness"] of yours and every act produced by [your] faith. 12) [We pray this] so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored by you, and that you will be honored by Him, according to

the unearned favor of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

1) Now concerning the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our being gathered to Him, brothers, 2) we request that you people do not become shaken up in your mind, nor alarmed, either by a spirit [i.e., by some prophetic prediction], or by a report, or by a letter supposedly from us, that the day of the Lord [i.e., when Jesus returns] has already come. 3) Do not allow anyone to deceive you in any way, for it will not occur until the rebellion comes first and the man of lawlessness becomes evident. [Note: This "rebellion" refers to a significant falling away from the teaching and practice of true Christianity (See I Tim. 4:1), characterized by the rise of an authoritative religious leader]. This man is doomed to be destroyed 4) [for] he opposes [the true Gospel message] and exalts himself against everything that is called "God" or that which is worshiped. So, he sits in God's temple [i.e., the church?] displaying himself as [though he were] God.

5) Do you not remember that I used to tell you these things when I was still with you? 6) [But] for now, there is something holding him back [i.e., holding back the man of lawlessness from emerging, See verses 3-4], and you people know what it is. [It is restraining him] so that he will not be revealed until his own [due] time. 7) For this mysterious lawlessness is already at work [or, "this lawlessness is already secretly at work"]; but the one who is holding it back [will continue to do so] until he is removed. 8) And then the lawless person [See verse 3] will be revealed, the one whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the brilliant appearance of His presence [i.e., at His second coming]. 9) The coming [of this lawless person] is according to the work of Satan, [and will be] attended by all kinds of [miraculous] signs and false wonders, 10) and all kinds of wicked deception toward those people who are perishing [spiritually], because they refused to love the truth so they could be saved. 11) And this is the reason that God sends them a strong delusion [to influence them]: It is so that they would believe the lie, 12) in order that all those who have not believed the truth, but have taken pleasure in wrongdoing, would be condemned.

13) But we ought to thank God for you always, brothers [who

are] dearly loved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning [Note: Some manuscripts use the Greek word for "firstfruits" instead of "beginning" here, but it is difficult to know in what sense the Thessalonian Christians were "first"], in order to be saved through being set apart by the Holy Spirit and through belief of the truth [of the Gospel]. **14)** He called you [to this salvation] through our Gospel message, in order that you could obtain the splendor of our Lord Jesus Christ [in heaven]. **15)** So then, brothers, stand firm [in the faith], and hold onto the [inspired] traditions which you were taught, whether by word [of mouth] or by a letter from us.

16) Now, may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us never ending encouragement and good hope through [His] unearned favor, **17)** encourage and strengthen your hearts in every good thing you do and say.

CHAPTER THREE

1) Finally, brothers, pray for us, so that the Lord's message will spread quickly and be honored [by people], even as it was among you. **2)** And [pray] that we will be rescued from wicked and evil people, because not everyone has faith. **3)** But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one [Note: The Greek says just "the evil"]. **4)** And we have confidence in [the fellowship of] the Lord concerning you, that you are doing, and will continue to do the things we command you. **5)** And may the Lord direct your hearts to love [people] as God does, and to be steadfast as Christ was.

6) Now we command you, brothers, in the name [i.e., by the authority] of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you people stay away from every brother [or sister] who lives an idle life [See note on I Thess. 5:14], and not according to the [inspired] tradition which you received from us. **7)** For you, yourselves, know how you ought to follow our example, for we did not live in idleness when we were among you; **8)** neither did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. But by hard labor and toil, we worked night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you. **9)** [We did this], not because we did not have a right [to support], but so we could become an example for you to imitate. **10)** For even when we were with you, we gave you this order: If any person does not [want to] work, he should not [get to] eat. **11)** For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, refusing

to work, but [instead] are just being busybodies. 12) Now we command and urge such people, in [the fellowship of] the Lord Jesus Christ, that they work quietly and earn their own living. 13) But you, brothers, should not get tired of doing what is right. 14) And if any person does not obey our instructions, [given] in this letter, you should take note of him so that you do not associate with him, in hope that he will become ashamed [of his conduct]. 15) And yet do not consider him to be an enemy, but warn him as [you would] a [Christian] brother.

16) Now may the Lord Himself, [who is the source] of peace, give you peace at all times and in every circumstance. May the Lord be with all of you.

17) This greeting [is being written] by me, Paul, in my own handwriting; it is the signature I write in every letter.

18) May the unearned favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you.

I TIMOTHY

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the command of God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope [of never ending life. See Titus 3:7]. 2) [It is being sent] to Timothy, my true son in the faith [i.e., in the realm of Christianity, not in a physical sense]. May you have unearned favor, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3) As I urged you to do when I was leaving Macedonia [See Acts 20:1ff], I want you to remain in Ephesus in order to urge certain people not to teach a different [i.e., false] doctrine, 4) and not to listen to legends or exhaustive lists of ancestors. These [only] serve to arouse speculations, rather than [promote] God's plan which is based on faith. 5) But the goal of this instruction is [to] love [God and people] from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6) Some people have strayed away from these things and have turned aside to useless discussions. 7) They want to be teachers of the law of Moses, even though they do not understand what they are saying or what they are affirming with [such] confidence. 8) But we know that the law of Moses is good if a person uses it properly. 9) We [also] know this: Law [or, "the law of Moses"] is not intended for a righteous person, but for lawbreakers and rebels, for ungodly people and sinners, for unholy and irreverent people, for people who kill their parents, for murderers, 10) for sexually immoral people, for homosexuals, for kidnappers, for liars, and for people who give false testimony. And [law is for] everything else that is against the sound teaching 11) found in the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was entrusted to me.

12) I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has strengthened me, appointing me to the ministry [i.e., to His service], because He considered me trustworthy, 13) [even] though I had previously spoken against Christ, and persecuted [Christians] and acted outrageously. However, I obtained mercy because I acted out of

ignorance, not believing [in Christ]. 14) [But] the unearned favor of our Lord was given to me in great abundance, producing faith and love which are [found] in [the fellowship of] Christ Jesus.

15) This saying is trustworthy and deserves to be fully accepted: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and I am the worst of them all. 16) However, even though I was the worst, I obtained mercy so that the patience of Jesus Christ could be shown toward the worst [of sinners] as an example for those people who would later believe in Him in order to [receive] never ending life. 17) Now, may there be honor and praise forever and ever to the eternal King, the immortal, invisible, only God. May it be so.

18) I give you this instruction, my son Timothy, in keeping with the previously spoken prophecies [i.e., predictions] about you, so that by [following] them you will fight the good battle, 19) holding on to [your] faith and a good conscience. Some people have rejected these things, resulting in the "shipwreck" of their faith [i.e., their spiritual life was ruined]. 20) Among these people are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered over to Satan [Note: This probably refers to withdrawing fellowship from them. See I Cor. 5:1-5], so that they would learn not to speak against God [anymore].

CHAPTER TWO

1) First of all, then, I urge you to offer [special] requests, prayers, intercessions [Note: "Intersessions" probably refers to praying on behalf of others], and thanksgivings for all people. 2) [Offer them] for kings and for all people in prominent [governmental] positions, so that we can live a peaceful and quiet life in all reverence [toward God] and respectability [toward people]. 3) This is good and acceptable [behavior] in the sight of God our Savior, 4) who wants all people to be saved and come to a [full] knowledge of the truth. 5) For there is one God and one Mediator between God and mankind --- the man Christ Jesus, 6) who gave Himself as a ransom on behalf of all people [i.e., as a substitute in place of others]. The proper time for the testimony [of this event to be proclaimed] has arrived. [Note: The correct meaning of the foregoing sentence is very difficult to determine]. 7) I was appointed to be a preacher [of this testimony] and an apostle and teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles. (I am telling the truth and not lying).

8) Therefore, I want the men to pray in every place [i.e., in all worship assemblies. See verses 1-2], lifting up holy hands without being angry or argumentative. [Note: This passage stresses both the physical and spiritual aspects of prayer].

9) I also want the women to dress themselves in proper clothing, with modesty and discretion, not with [elaborately] braided hair, or gold [ornaments], or pearls, or expensive clothing, **10)** but with good deeds, which are [more] appropriate for women who claim to be godly. **11)** A woman should learn [the Scriptures] in quietness, being fully submissive. **12)** But I do not allow a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man [in the assembly], but she should remain quiet. **13)** For Adam was created first, and then Eve was. [See Gen. 1:27; 2:21-22]. **14)** And Adam was not [the one] deceived, but [it was] the woman who, when deceived, fell into sin. **15)** But she [i.e., womankind] will be saved [from condemnation, in spite of the "curse" of suffering pain] through childbearing [See Gen. 3:16], provided they [i.e., all women] continue to have faith and love and holiness, along with discretion.

CHAPTER THREE

1) This is a trustworthy saying: If any man eagerly desires to be an overseer [i.e., an elder], he desires a noble task. **2)** Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of [only] one wife, sober-minded [Note: When this word, used here figuratively, is used in its literal sense, it means to abstain from intoxicating drinks], sensible, respectable, hospitable, capable of teaching. **3)** [He must] not be a drunkard or a fighter, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not wanting to get money by questionable [or, dishonest] means. **4)** [He must] manage his own family well and, with dignity, keep his children in subjection [or, "respectful"]. **5)** For if a man does not know how to manage his own family, how will he be able to take care of the church of God? **6)** [He must] not be a new convert or else he could become conceited [i.e., over being in a leadership position] and fall into the [same] condemnation incurred by the devil. **7)** He must also have a good reputation among outsiders [i.e., non-Christians], or else he could fall into reproach [i.e., from worldly people] and [therefore] into the devil's trap.

8) Similarly, deacons should be serious-minded [i.e.,

dignified], not saying one thing while meaning another, not drinking a lot of wine [Note: The wine of Paul's day was used as a common drink, and was either non-intoxicating or far less intoxicating than wine today], not wanting to get money by questionable [or, dishonest] means. 9) They should keep holding on to the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. 10) And these [prospective deacons] should also first be tested, [and] then they should [be appointed to] serve [as deacons] if they are found to be above reproach. 11) Women [i.e., probably the deacons' wives], in the same way, should be serious-minded [i.e., dignified], not gossips, [but] sober-minded [see verse 2] and trustworthy in everything. 12) Deacons should be husbands of one wife, managing their children and their own family affairs well. 13) For those who have served well [as deacons] acquire for themselves a good standing [i.e., they are respected in the church], and the ability to speak boldly [or, to act confidently] in the faith that is in Christ Jesus [i.e., in the Christian faith].

14) Although I hope to visit you soon, I am writing these things [in this letter] 15) so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to behave themselves in God's family, which is the church of the living God, the [supporting] column and foundation of the truth. 16) And without question the revealed secret of godly living is great. [It is this]: He [i.e., Christ, or God], who appeared in a fleshly body [was] vindicated [of false charges] by the Holy Spirit; [He was] seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed in throughout the world [and finally] was taken up into glory [i.e., heaven].

CHAPTER FOUR

1) Now the Holy Spirit specifically says that in later times [Note: "Later times" in the New Testament usually refers to the period following the first coming of Christ and the establishment of the church], some people will fall away from the faith [i.e., the true teaching of Christianity]. They will pay attention to deceitful spirits [i.e., lying people] and the teaching of evil spirits. 2) [Such teaching will be spread] by hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared over as with a hot iron [i.e., making them insensitive to their guilt]. 3) They forbid people to get married and require them to avoid [eating] certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and

[fully] know the truth. 4) For everything created by God is permitted [to be eaten] and nothing should be refused, if it is received with gratitude, 5) for it is consecrated [i.e., made acceptable] by the word of God and prayer.

6) If you point out these things to the brothers you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, and will be nurtured by the message of the faith and of the good teaching which you have been following. 7) But you should have nothing to do with those worldly myths [See 1:4] and superstitious tales [often] told by old women. Instead, train yourself for living a godly life. 8) For physical training is useful to some extent [or, "for a short time"], but living godly is useful in every way, for it promises benefits [not only] for the present life, but [also] for the life to come. 9) This [foregoing] saying is trustworthy and deserves to be fully accepted. 10) For that reason we work hard and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, [and] especially of those who believe [in Christ].

11) Command and teach these things [i.e., the foregoing teaching. See verse 6-7]. 12) Do not allow anyone to look down on you because you are [so] young, but you should be an example to those who believe [in Christ] in your speech, in your conduct, in your love, in your faith [and] in your purity. 13) Until I come [to you], pay attention to the [public] reading [of Scripture], to exhorting people and to teaching. 14) Do not neglect [using] the gift [i.e., of serving as an evangelist. See II Tim. 4:5], which was given to you in response to a prophetic message [or, prediction], along with the laying on of the elders' hands [i.e., signifying your appointment]. 15) Be attentive to these things [i.e., all of the foregoing]; be involved in [practicing] them, so that your progress [in the ministry] will be evident to everyone. 16) Pay close attention to yourself and to what you teach [people]. Continue doing these things, for in doing them you will both save yourself and those who listen to you.

CHAPTER FIVE

1) Do not rebuke an older man, but appeal to him as [you would to] your father. [Appeal to] the younger men as [you would to] your brothers; 2) [to] older women as [you would to] mothers; [to] the younger women as [you would to] your sisters, in a [morally]

pure way. 3) Show consideration for true widows [i.e., those destitute of family members to care for them]. 4) But if any widow has children or grandchildren, these should first learn [how] to show respectful consideration for their own family members, and [thus] to repay their parents [i.e., for bringing them up and caring for their material needs], for this is pleasing in the sight of God. 5) Now the woman who is a true widow, and living all alone, has placed her hope in God and continues [to offer] special requests and prayers [for help?] night and day. 6) But the widow who devotes herself to unrestrained pleasure is [spiritually] dead, even while still living. 7) Command these things also, so that they [i.e., the widows and their families] can live above reproach. 8) But if anyone does not provide for [the needs of] his own [relatives], and especially for his own [immediate] family, he has denied the faith [i.e., the fundamental beliefs of Christianity], and is worse than an unbeliever. 9) [But] do not put a widow on the list [i.e., of people being helped by the church. See Acts 6:1] who is under sixty years old. [And she must] have been the wife of one man, 10) having a reputation for doing good deeds, [such as] bringing up children, showing hospitality to strangers, washing the feet of the saints [i.e., God's holy people], assisting people in trouble and devoting herself to doing all [other] kinds of good deeds.

11) But refuse [to put] younger widows [on the list. See verse 9], because when they become restless for sensual pleasure, contrary to [their commitment to] Christ, they want to get married [again]. 12) Thus, they bring the judgment [for being untrustworthy] on themselves because they have broken their previous pledge. [Note: This probably refers to younger widows who pledged themselves to fulfill some important church activity and then quit suddenly to get married. But some suggest it refers to them leaving the faith and marrying a non-Christian]. 13) And on top of that, they learn to be idle, going around from house to house; and not only idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things they should not be. 14) Therefore, I want the younger widows to get married, have children and manage their homes, so that they do not give the enemy [i.e., non-Christians] an opportunity for speaking against [the church]. 15) For some [young widows] have already turned away [from their commitment to God] to serve Satan. 16) [Therefore], if any woman believer has widows [in her family], she should take care of them and not require the church to be burdened, so that it can take care of the

true widows [i.e., destitute ones].

17) The elders who lead [the church] well should be considered deserving of double honor [Note: This probably refers to financial support in addition to the honor of the office], especially those who work hard at [preaching] the word and at teaching it. **18)** For the Scripture says [Deut. 25:4], "You should not put a muzzle on the ox while it tramples over the grain." And [Luke 10:7], "The worker deserves his wages." **19)** Do not listen to an accusation against an elder unless it comes from two or three witnesses. **20)** You should rebuke in front of everyone [in the church] those elders who continue to sin, so that the rest [of the congregation] will be afraid [of sinning].

21) I solemnly urge you, in the presence of God, and Christ Jesus and the elect [i.e., chosen] angels, that you obey these instructions without showing prejudice [toward anyone], or doing anything out of partiality.

22) Do not be in a hurry to lay hands on anyone [i.e., to appoint them to office. See 4:14], and do not participate in the sins of other people. [Note: If Timothy failed to carefully determine the qualifications of a prospective elder before appointing him, it would make him partially responsible for any wrongdoing by that elder]. Keep yourself pure [i.e., of involvement in anyone's sins]. **23)** Do not continue drinking water only, but use a little wine [i.e., for its medicinal value] for your stomach and for your frequent [other] ailments. **24)** The sins of some people are evident, preceding them to [the day of] judgment, but the sins of other people follow them there. **25)** In the same way, the good deeds [of people] are [also] evident, and even those [deeds] which are not [good] cannot be hidden.

CHAPTER SIX

1) All those people who are under the reins of slavery [i.e., in subjection to someone] should consider their own masters as deserving of full respect, so that God's name and [His] teaching will not be spoken against [i.e., by unbelievers]. **2)** And those slaves who have believing masters should not despise them, since they are [Christian] brothers, but rather they should serve them all the more [faithfully]. For those [masters] who benefit from their service are believers and dearly loved [by them and God]. Teach and exhort people regarding these things.

3) If anyone teaches a different doctrine [i.e., from what has been urged above], and does not agree to [proclaim the] sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to teaching that is godly [i.e., in harmony with godliness], 4) that person is conceited. He does not understand anything, but has an unhealthy concern for controversy and arguments over words, which produce envy, dissension, abusive language, evil suspicions, 5) [and] continual wranglings between people with corrupt minds, who are deprived of the truth. They think that [professing] godliness is a way to obtain [financial] gain. 6) But godliness [itself] is great gain, [when it is] accompanied by contentment. 7) For we did not bring anything into the world, and we cannot take anything out of it either. 8) But if we have [enough] food and clothing, we will [i.e., should] be content with that. 9) But those people who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and [spiritual] destruction. 10) For, loving money is a source of all kinds of evil, [and] some people who crave it have been led astray from the faith, and have stabbed themselves [in the heart] with many sorrows.

11) But you, man of God, run from these things [See verses 3-10], and pursue right-living and godliness, having faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. 12) Fight the good battle of the faith; take hold of never ending life, to which you were called [i.e., by the Gospel. See II Thess. 2:14], [when] you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. [Note: This "confession" probably refers to a person's acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord and Christ prior to his immersion. See Acts 2:36; Rom. 10:9-10]. 13) I [solemnly] urge you in the presence of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who made the good confession when He testified in front of Pontius Pilate [See John 18:37; Matt. 27:17], 14) to obey this command without [moral] blemish or blame. [Note: This "command" probably refers to Timothy's responsibility to fulfill his ministry. See verses 11-12; II Tim. 4:1-2]. [Do this] until our Lord Jesus Christ returns, 15) which God will bring about in its [or, "His"] own time. [For] He is the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. 16) He alone possesses immortality [Note: That is, only God possesses an eternal existence, with neither beginning nor ending. See John 5:26], and lives in unapproachable light. No one has seen Him, or can see Him. May there be honor and never ending power to Him. May it be so.

17) [Solemnly] urge those who are rich in this present world

not to be arrogant, nor to place their hope in the uncertainty of [their] wealth, but in God, who generously supplies us with everything to enjoy. 18) [Urge them] to do what is good, to be rich in [the practice of] good deeds, to be generous and willing to share [with others]. 19) [In that way] they will store up for themselves a treasure [of never ending rewards] for providing a solid foundation for the future, so that they can take hold of the true life [i.e., in heaven].

20) [So], Timothy, guard [the Gospel message] which has been entrusted to you, while avoiding worldly, empty chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called "knowledge," 21) which some people have claimed [to have], and in doing so have strayed from the faith.

May [God's] unearned favor be upon you.

II TIMOTHY

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to [the ministry of proclaiming] the promise of never ending life, which is [obtained] through [fellowship with] Christ Jesus. 2) [It is being sent] to Timothy, my dearly loved son. May you have unearned favor, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3) I thank God, whom I worship [or, "serve"] with a clear conscience, as my forefathers did, that I can remember you [i.e., your commitment] continually in my prayers night and day. 4) Remembering how you cried [Note: This was probably when Paul and Timothy last parted], I long to see you [again], so that I can be filled with joy. 5) I [also] remember the sincere faith you have in your heart, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am convinced, lives in you [too]. 6) The reason I am reminding you [of these things] is so that you will rekindle the gift from God, which is in your life through the laying on my hands. [Note: This "gift" was probably his ordination to serve as an evangelist (See 4:1-5), and in addition, may have included a supernatural "spiritual gift" bestowed by the apostle Paul]. 7) For God did not give us a spirit [i.e., a disposition] that makes us cowards but one that gives us power and love and self-control.

8) So, do not be ashamed to testify for our Lord, or ashamed of [being associated with] me, His prisoner, but [be willing to] suffer hardship with me for the sake of the Gospel, relying on God's power [to sustain you]. 9) [It is] God who saved us and called us to live holy lives [or, "to be dedicated people"], not as a result of our [good] deeds, but in harmony with His own purpose and unearned favor. [This was] given to us through [the atoning work of] Christ Jesus, before the beginning of time. [Note: Salvation through Christ was planned before time began. See Titus 1:2; Rom. 16:25; Eph. 1:4]. 10) But, it has [only] now been made known to us by the appearance of our Savior Christ Jesus, who has put an end to death and brought [never ending] life and

incorruption [i.e., immortality] to light through the Gospel [message], 11) of which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. 12) For I am suffering these things [See verse 8] for this reason [i.e., because of being a Gospel preacher]. Yet I am not ashamed because I know whom I have believed in [i.e., Jesus], and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him [i.e., Paul's spiritual well-being] until that day [i.e., the day of judgment].

13) You should hold on firmly to the pattern of sound teaching that you have heard from me, while [maintaining your] faith and love in [harmony with] Christ Jesus. 14) [Also] guard that precious treasure [i.e., the Gospel message] which was entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit, who lives in us.

15) You know that all those people in [the province of] Asia deserted me [i.e., those who could have helped me], including Phygelus and Hermogenes. 16) [But], may the Lord grant mercy to Onesiphorus' family, for he cheered me up many times and was not ashamed of my [being in] chains. 17) But, when he was in Rome, he looked for me diligently until he found me. 18) May the Lord grant that he will find mercy on that day [i.e., the day of judgment]. And you know very well the many things he did to serve [me while I was] at Ephesus.

CHAPTER TWO

1) So, may you, my son, be strengthened through the unearned favor that comes from [your fellowship with] Christ Jesus. 2) And the things that you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, you should pass on to trustworthy men who will be able to teach other people also. 3) [Be willing to] suffer hardship with me like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4) No soldier on active duty, gets himself involved in the affairs of civilian life, so that he can please the person who enlisted him [i.e., his commanding officer]. 5) And if a person competes as an athlete, he is not awarded the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. 6) [And] the farmer who works hard should be the first one to receive a share of the crops. 7) Consider what I am saying, for the Lord will help you to understand everything.

8) [In the face of trouble] remember Jesus Christ, a

descendant of King David, who was raised from the dead according to my Gospel, 9) for which I am suffering difficulty [here] in prison, as [though I were] a criminal. But God's message is not "in prison." 10) So, I endure everything for the elect's sake [i.e., God's people], so that they can obtain the salvation which comes through Christ Jesus, with [its] never ending splendor.

11) This saying is trustworthy: For if we have died with Christ [i.e., stopped the practice of sin, See Rom. 6:1-11], we will also live with Him [i.e., both here and hereafter]. 12) If we endure [i.e., remain faithful through suffering], we will also rule with Him [i.e., both here and hereafter]. If we deny Him, He will also deny us. [See Matt. 10:33]. 13) If we prove to be unfaithful [i.e., to our commitment to Christ], He [still] remains faithful [to His word], for He cannot deny Himself. [Note: This verse refers to Christ remaining true to His promise of either accepting or rejecting us. See Matt. 10:32-33].

14) Remind them [Note: This probably refers to the "trustworthy men" there at Ephesus. See 2:2] of these things [i.e., the truths just mentioned. Verses 8-13], solemnly urging them, in the presence of the Lord, not to argue over words, [for] it is useless and brings [only] ruin to those who listen to it. 15) Do your best to present yourself as a worker who is approved by God [and] does not have to be ashamed, [because you are] accurately handling [i.e., explaining] the message of truth. 16) But avoid worldly, empty chatter, for those who practice it will become more and more ungodly, 17) and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among these people are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18) who have strayed from the truth [by] saying that the resurrection [from the dead] has already happened and are undermining the faith of some people. 19) However, the solid foundation of God stands firm. [Note: This probably refers to the church. See I Tim. 3:15]. It is sealed with these words [i.e., certifying God's ownership and a commitment to Him]: "The Lord knows those who are His people," [See Num. 16:5], and "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord should stop practicing wickedness." [See Isa. 36:13].

20) Now in a large house there are utensils made, not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay. And some are for honorable uses [i.e., for special occasions] and some are for common, ordinary use. 21) If a person rids himself of the common ones [i.e., the influences of evil people and qualities], he will be an instrument for [God's] honor, dedicated, suitable for use by the Master, [and]

prepared for [doing] every good deed.

22) But run from the evil desires of youth and pursue [the practice of] right living, faith, love and peace, along with those people who call on the Lord [i.e., in prayer] from a pure heart. **23)** But refuse [to participate in] foolish and stupid arguments, knowing that they produce quarrelling. **24)** For the Lord's slave must not quarrel, but be kind toward everyone, capable of teaching, [and] patient [with difficult people and situations]. **25)** [He must] gently correct those people who oppose [him], in hope that God will give them [opportunity for] repentance, leading to a [full] knowledge of the truth, **26)** and that they will come to their senses and escape from being trapped by the devil, who had captured them to do what he wanted.

CHAPTER THREE

1) But you should know this: There will be terrible times in the last days [of the Christian age]. **2)** For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, abusive talkers, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3)** lacking in natural affection, unwilling to be reconciled [to their enemies], slanderers, lacking self-control, brutal, haters of what is good, **4)** treacherous [i.e., betrayers], reckless, conceited, [and] lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. **5)** [These people] maintain an appearance of being godly, but they have denied its power; [you should] turn away from such people. **6)** They are the kind of people who enter homes and influence [morally] weak-willed women, loaded down with sins, [and] led on by all kinds of evil desires. **7)** They are constantly learning and [yet] never able to arrive at a [full] knowledge of the truth. **8)** These people oppose the truth just like Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses. They have corrupt minds and are worthless as far as the faith is concerned. **9)** But they will not advance any farther [in their sin] because their foolish ways will become obvious to everyone, just as those of Jannes and Jambres were.

10) But you have followed [Note: This word means "to observe closely, have a keen interest in"] my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, **11)** persecutions and sufferings. You know what kind of things happened to me at Antioch, Iconium and Lystra [See

Acts 13:13-14:23], and what [severe] persecutions I experienced [there]. But the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12) In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in [the service of] Christ will be persecuted. 13) But evil people and impostors will go from bad to worse [in their behavior], deceiving people and being deceived by them. 14) But you should continue [to believe and practice] what you have learned and been convinced of, knowing those from whom you learned it. [Note: These persons would include Lois and Eunice (See 1:5), as well as Paul himself]. 15) And [remember] that, from childhood, you have known the sacred Scriptures which are able to make you wise [enough] to be saved through faith in Christ Jesus. 16) All Scripture is inspired by God [Note: Literally, this word means "breathed out by God"] and is useful for teaching [truth], rebuking [wrongdoing], correcting [error] and for providing instruction [i.e., training] on how to live right, 17) so that the man of God will be thoroughly equipped for [doing] every good deed.

CHAPTER FOUR

1) In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge [both] those still alive and those who have already died, and in view of His appearing [i.e., at His second coming] and His kingdom [i.e., when it is revealed in its eternal splendor], I solemnly urge you: 2) Preach the [Gospel] message; be prepared [to do it both] when it is convenient and when it is inconvenient; reprove [i.e., convince people of their wrongdoing], rebuke [i.e., convict people of their sin], and exhort [i.e., urge people to act], with great patience and teaching. 3) For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound teaching, but will assemble to themselves teachers who will satisfy what their "itching ears" want to hear. 4) They will refuse to listen to the truth and will turn their attention to myths. 5) But you should be sober-minded about everything, [willing to] endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

6) For I am already being "poured out like a drink offering," and the time for me to leave has come. [Note: Paul here likens the prospect of shedding his blood for the work of Christ to the pouring of wine and oil on an Old Testament sacrifice]. 7) I have fought the good battle; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith [i.e., I have been true to my commitment]. 8) So, now there is a crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the

Lord, who is a just Judge, will award me on that day [i.e., the judgment day], and not to me only, but also to everyone who has loved [the prospect of] His appearing.

9) Hurry up and come to me as soon [as possible], 10) for Demas loved this world and [so] has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia. 11) Luke is the only one [of my fellow-workers still] with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you for he [will be] helpful to me in [my] ministry. 12) But I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. 13) When you come, bring my cloak that I left at Troas with Crispus, along with the scrolls and especially the parchments.

14) Alexander the metal worker did me much harm; the Lord will repay him for what he did. 15) You should beware of him, for he strongly opposed our message.

16) At my first defense [Note: Paul here refers to his initial hearing before the Roman court] no one supported me, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. 17) But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message could be fully proclaimed and that all the Gentiles could hear it. And I was rescued from the lion's mouth. [Note: This is probably a figure of speech indicating that Paul had escaped some immediate danger. See Psa. 22:20-21]. 18) The Lord will [continue to] rescue me from all harm and will bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. May He be praised forever and ever. May it be so.

19) [I send] greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, and to the family of Onesiphorus. 20) Erastus stayed on at Corinth, but I left Trophimus sick at Miletus. 21) Hurry up and come [to me] before winter. Eubulus sends his greetings, along with Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia and all [the rest of] the brothers.

22) May the Lord be with your spirit [i.e., close to you]. May God's unearned favor be with you.

TITUS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] Paul, a slave of God, and an apostle for [the benefit of] the faith of God's elect [i.e., His chosen people] and [to spread] the knowledge of the truth which leads to godliness, 2) [and provides] hope for never ending life. God, who cannot lie, promised this [life] before the beginning of time, 3) but at the proper time revealed [it] through the message entrusted to me to proclaim, by the commandment of God our Savior. 4) [It is being sent] to Titus, my true son, [who shares] in a common faith. [May you have] unearned favor and peace [which come] from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

5) The reason I left you in Crete [Note: This was an island in the Mediterranean Sea off the southern coast of Greece] was so you could set in order the things that were lacking and appoint elders in every city [i.e., where there was a church], as I directed you. 6) [An elder must] not be guilty of just blame, [he must be] the husband of one wife, whose children are believers [Note: The word for "believers" may also be translated "faithful ones" or "trustworthy ones"], who have a reputation for not being wild or disobedient. 7) As God's manager [of the church], an overseer must be free from just blame, not a drunkard, not a fighter [and] not in love with money. 8) [He must be] hospitable, someone who loves what is good, sensible, upright, devout and self-controlled. 9) [He must] hold on firmly to the trustworthy message, which is according to [our] teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort people with sound teaching and to convince those who contradict it.

10) For there are many rebellious people, especially among the circumcision [i.e., the Jews], whose talk is useless and who deceive people. 11) They must be silenced [because] they are upsetting entire families by teaching things they should not be for the shameful purpose of making money. 12) Even one of their own prophets said, "The people of Crete are always liars, vicious beasts and lazy gluttons." 13) [And] this testimony is true. [So], for this reason you should rebuke them severely, so that they will be sound in the faith, 14) instead of paying attention to Jewish myths and

commandments of men who reject the truth. **15)** Everything is pure [i.e., ceremonially acceptable] to the person who is pure [i.e., who has been cleansed by the blood of Christ], but to those who are [spiritually] corrupt, and do not believe [in Christ], nothing is pure, but both their minds and consciences are corrupted. [Note: This statement was intended to remove the physical restrictions imposed by the law of Moses]. **16)** These people claim to know God [as Savior], but they deny Him by their actions, so they are detestable and disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

CHAPTER TWO

1) But you should speak those things which agree with sound teaching: **2)** Older men should be sober-minded [See note at I Tim. 3:2], dignified [i.e., respectable], sensible, sound in the faith [or, "in their faith"], in their love and in their perseverance.

3) Older women, likewise, should be reverent in their behavior, not slanderers, not addicted to much wine, teachers of what is good. **4)** Then they can train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, **5)** to be sensible, [morally] pure, [good] homemakers, kind [and] in subjection to their own husbands, so that God's message will not be spoken against.

6) In the same way, you should exhort the younger men to be sensible. **7)** In everything [you do], you should show that you are a [proper] example of doing good deeds. In your teaching show integrity, dignity, **8)** and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that the person who opposes [us] will have to be ashamed for not having anything bad to say about us.

9) Slaves should be in subjection to their own masters in everything. They should try hard to please them, without talking back **10)** or keeping [part of their master's] property for themselves, but proving to be completely trustworthy, so that they will make the teaching of God our Savior attractive in every way.

11) For God's unearned favor has appeared, bringing salvation to all people [i.e., in the coming of Christ]. **12)** It instructs us to give up ungodly living and worldly desires and to live sensible, righteous and godly lives in this present age, **13)** while looking forward to the blessed hope [i.e., the hope that produces blessings]

and the coming splendor of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. 14) He gave Himself up for us, to buy us back from [enslavement to] all [kinds of] wickedness and to purify for Himself a group of people who belong to Him and who are eager to do good deeds.

15) You should teach these things and exhort and rebuke people with full authority. Do not let anyone look down on you. [See note on I Tim. 4:12].

CHAPTER THREE

1) Remind the people [where you minister] to be in subjection to [civic] rulers, [governmental] authorities, to be obedient [to them], to be prepared for [doing] every good deed, 2) to slander no one, to be peaceful, to be considerate [or, "gentle"] and to show every courtesy to all people. 3) For we [Christians] were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various kinds of [evil] desires and [sinful] pleasures. [We used to] live in malice and envy, hating people and being hated by them. 4) But when the kindness and love of God our Savior toward mankind appeared, 5) He saved us, not because of any good deeds we ourselves had done, but because of His mercy. [He saved us] through the washing of new birth [Note: This refers to our immersion in water] and the renewing [work] of the Holy Spirit, 6) whom God poured out upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. 7) [This was] so that, being made right with God by His unearned favor, we could have the hope of [possessing our] inheritance of never ending life [in heaven]. 8) This saying is trustworthy and I want you [in your teaching] to affirm these things with confidence, so that those people who have trusted God will be careful to devote themselves to doing good deeds. These things [i.e., just mentioned] are good and profitable for people [to do].

9) But you should avoid foolish arguments, and [pointless] discussions about ancestors, and quarrels and disputes about [observance of] the law of Moses, for they are unprofitable and useless. 10) After you have warned a divisive person twice, have nothing more to do with him [i.e., withdraw spiritual fellowship from him]. 11) You can be sure that such a person is [spiritually] corrupt and sinful, and that he is condemned by his own actions.

12) As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your

best to come to me at Nicopolis [Note: Since there were several places by this name, its exact location is unknown], because I plan to spend the winter there.

13) Do all you can [materially] to send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey, so that they do not [have to] lack anything [they need]. **14)** Our people [i.e., the Christians there on Crete] also should learn to practice good deeds for meeting pressing needs, so that they can be productive [in the Lord's work].

15) All those who are with me send you their greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith [i.e., our fellow Christians].

May God's unearned favor be with all of you.

PHILEMON

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, [and is being sent] to Philemon our dearly loved [brother] and fellow-worker, 2) and to Apphia our sister [Note: This was probably Philemon's wife], and to Archippus our fellow-soldier [Note: This was probably Philemon's preacher son. See Col. 4:17] and to the church [that meets] in your house. 3) May there be unearned favor to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4) I always thank my God [for you] as I mention you in my prayers, 5) hearing of your love for all saints [i.e., God's holy people], and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. 6) [I pray] that the sharing of your faith [with others, or possibly with Paul] will be effective when you fully realize all the good you can do for Christ. 7) For I have much joy and encouragement from [observing] your love, because you have cheered the hearts of the saints [i.e., God's holy people], brother.

8) Therefore, although in [the fellowship of] Christ I have enough boldness to order you to do the proper thing, 9) yet out of [mutual] love, I appeal to you [to do what I ask]. For I Paul, am an old man, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus. [Note: Most calculations suggest that Paul was approximately 60 years old, which was considered a relatively advanced age in that day]. 10) I appeal to you on behalf of my son, Onesimus, whom I [spiritually] conceived while [here] in prison. 11) He was once useless to me, but is now useful to [both] you and me. [Note: Since the name Onesimus means "useful," it appears Paul is making an intentional play on the word.] 12) [Now] I am sending him back to you in person, [as though he were] part of my very self. 13) I really wanted to keep him [here] with me so that, on your behalf, he could minister to me while in prison for the sake of the Gospel. 14) But I did not want to do anything without your permission, so that your goodness [of heart] would not be shown out of a feeling of obligation, but out of willingness. 15) For possibly Onesimus left you for a short time so that you could have him [back] forever, 16) not as a slave [only], but more than a slave, as a dearly loved brother. [He is that] to me especially, but how much more to you, both in a physical way [i.e.,

by continuing to serve as your slave] and in [the fellowship of] the Lord [i.e., now also as your brother in Christ]. 17) If then you consider me to be a partner [in the faith], welcome him [back] as [you would] me. 18) But if he has done anything wrong to you, or owes you any [money], charge it to my account. 19) I, Paul, am writing this in my own handwriting: I will pay you back. [But] I will not mention that you owe me your own self, as well. 20) So, brother, I would like to have your help in [the fellowship of] the Lord; cheer me up in Christ [i.e., by welcoming Onesimus back on good terms]. 21) I am writing you, confident that you will be obedient [to my requests], and I know that you will do even more than I am asking [of you].

22) And another thing: Prepare a place for me to stay, because I hope that through [an answer to] your prayers I will be returned to you. [Note: Paul was hoping to be released from imprisonment to visit Philemon at Colosse].

23) Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in [the service of] Christ sends you his greetings, 24) along with [John] Mark [Note: This shows that Mark was now back in the good graces of Paul. See Acts 15:36-40], Aristarchus, Demas [Note: This man later deserted Paul. See II Tim. 4:10] and Luke, who are [also] my fellow-workers. [Note: These men, unlike Epaphras who was imprisoned with Paul, were free to minister for Christ there in Rome].

25) May the unearned favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. May it be so.

HEBREWS

CHAPTER ONE

1) In times past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets in many parts and in various ways, 2) [but] during these final days He has spoken to us through His Son [Note: This period refers to the Christian age (See Acts 2:14-36)], whom He appointed to be heir of all things [and] through whom He created the universe. [See John 1:3; Col. 1:16]. 3) This Son expresses the radiance of God's splendor and represents His very Being, and He sustains everything by His powerful word. After He had provided cleansing for [man's] sins, He sat down at the right side of the Majesty [i.e., God] on high [i.e., in heaven]. 4) He had become as much superior [in rank] to the angels as the name He inherited [i.e., "Son". See next verse] was superior to theirs [i.e., the name "angels" means "messengers"]. 5) For, to which angel did God ever say [Psa. 2:7], "You are my Son, today I have conceived you"? And again [II Sam. 7:14], "I will be His Father, and He will be my Son"? 6) And again, when God sent the Firstborn One [i.e., Jesus. See Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18; Rev. 1:5] into the world, He said [Deut. 32:43 LXX], "And all of God's angels should worship Him." 7) But God said [this] about the angels [Psa. 104:4 LXX], "He [i.e., God] makes His angels to be [like] winds and His servants [like] flames of fire." [Note: The idea is probably that angels obediently serve God's purpose similar to the way wind and lightning do]. 8) But God says [this] about the Son [Psa. 97:7], "Your throne [i.e. kingdom], O God [Note: This term here is applied to Jesus], will last forever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter [i.e., the standard for ruling] of your kingdom. 9) You have loved what is right and hated what is wrong, therefore God, your God [i.e., the Father], has placed you above your companions when He anointed you [i.e., specially chose you] with the oil of joy [i.e., your selection as king was a joyous occasion]. 10) And [Psa. 102:25-27 says], "Lord, in the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hand. 11) They will be destroyed, but you will remain. And they [i.e., the heavens and earth] will all wear out like an article of clothing. 12) And you will fold them up like a robe, and they will be changed like an article of

clothing. But you will stay the same and your years will never end." 13) But which one of the angels did God ever say [this] about [Psa. 110:1], "You should sit at my right side until I put your enemies [in full subjection] beneath your feet"? 14) Are not all angels ministering spirits sent out [by God] to serve those people who will inherit salvation?

CHAPTER TWO

1) So [then], we [Christians] should pay closer attention to the things we have heard, so that we do not drift away from [believing and practicing] them. 2) For if the message spoken through angels proved to be binding [Note: This is a reference to the law of Moses. See Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19], and every violation [of it] and disobedience [to it] received a just penalty, 3) how will we escape [punishment] if we neglect such a great salvation? [For it was] first announced [to people] by the Lord and then confirmed to us [i.e., the writer and other Christians] by those who heard Him [i.e., the original apostles]. 4) God also testified, along with those people, by [giving them] both signs and wonders and various miracles, and by [supernatural] gifts distributed [to them] by the Holy Spirit, as He desired.

5) For God did not place the coming inhabited world [Note: "The coming inhabited world" here probably refers to the present Christian age. It was viewed as "coming" from the perspective of Old Testament times], under the control of angels [and] that is the world we are talking about. 6) But someone has testified somewhere [Psa. 8:4-6], "What is man, that you [i.e., God] should remember him? Or the son of man [i.e., mankind], that you should care about him? 7) You made him a little bit lower than the angels [i.e., a little less exalted]. [Note: Although these Psalms passages referred to mankind, they are here applied to Jesus. See verse 9]. You crowned him with splendor and honor, {{some ancient manuscripts add "and placed him as ruler over what you made"}}. 8) You placed everything under his feet [Note: This is true of both mankind (Gen. 1:26-28) and of Jesus (Eph. 1:22-23)]. For in subjecting everything to him, God did not leave anything that is not subject to him. But at the present time we do not see what all has been subjected to him. 9) But we do see Jesus, who was made a little bit lower than the angels [i.e., by suffering death as a human being], and was crowned with splendor and honor because He suffered death. It was by God's unearned favor that He would

experience death for every person.

10) For it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, in order to lead many [of His] children to glory [i.e., heaven], would make the author [or, pioneer] of their salvation [i.e., Jesus] completely [qualified] through [His] sufferings. 11) For, both the One who makes people holy [i.e., Jesus], and those who are made holy [i.e., Christians], all come from one [Father], and for this reason Christ is not ashamed to call them His brothers, 12) for He says [Psa. 22:22], [Note: In the following three Old Testament quotations the writer represents Christ as the speaker] "I will declare your [i.e., God's] name to my brothers, [and] in the presence of the assembly I will sing [a hymn of] praise to you." 13) And again, [Isa. 8:17 LXX], "I will place my trust in God." And again, [Isa. 8:18], "Look, [here] I am with the children whom God gave me." 14) Therefore, since the children share in [bodies of] flesh and blood, Christ also, in the same way, took on a human body so that, through His death, He could destroy [the dominion of] him who had the power to cause death, that is, the devil. 15) And [also He could] release all of those people who, because of their fear of death, were [kept] in bondage all their lives. 16) For certainly Christ does not [intend to] help angels, but He [intends to] help the descendants of Abraham [i.e., the Jews]. 17) So, for this reason, He had to become like His brothers in every way [i.e., except that He never sinned], so that He could become a merciful and faithful Head Priest in things related to God's [service], [and] that He could provide a covering over for people's sins [i.e., make atonement for them]. 18) For since He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is [also] able to help those who [suffer when they] are tempted.

CHAPTER THREE

1) Therefore, holy brothers [and sisters], who have been called [by God] to share in heaven, think about Jesus, the Apostle and Head Priest, whom we have confessed [as Savior]. 2) He was faithful to God who appointed Him, just as Moses was [also] faithful in [serving] God's household [i.e., the Israelites]. 3) For Jesus has been considered deserving of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house deserves greater honor than the house itself. 4) For every house is built by someone, but God is the Builder of everything. 5)

Now Moses was a faithful servant among all of [those belonging to] God's household [i.e., the Israelites], as [one who gave] testimony about the things which [were to be] spoken [by him], **6)** but Christ [was faithful] as a Son over God's household. And we [Christians] are that household, if we hold on to our confidence [in Christ], and to the boasting [i.e., joy] of our hope [in God], firmly to the end [of our lives].

7) So, even as the Holy Spirit said [Psa. 95:7-11], "Today, if you hear His [i.e., God's] voice, **8)** do not have a stubborn heart like you did when you provoked [God] during the time you tested [His patience] in the desert, **9)** where your forefathers tried me and tested [my patience] when they saw what I did for forty years. **10)** Therefore, I was angry with that generation of people and said, 'They always go astray in their hearts, and they did not understand my ways.' **11)** So I vowed in my anger, 'They will not enter a state of rest with me.'"

12) Pay attention, brothers, so that there will not be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, [resulting] in falling away from the living God. **13)** But [instead], encourage one another each day, as long as it is [still] called "Today," so that none of you becomes stubborn [as a result] of the deceitfulness of sin. **14)** For we have become sharers with Christ, if we hold firmly onto the confidence [we had in Him] from the beginning until the end [of our lives]. **15)** As it has been said [Psa. 95:7], "Today, if you hear His voice [i.e., the voice of God], do not have a stubborn heart like you did when you provoked [God]."

16) For who were they who heard [God] and provoked [Him]? Was it not everyone who was led out of Egypt by Moses? **17)** And who was God angry with for forty years? Was it not with those people who sinned, whose bodies fell [dead] in the desert? **18)** And to whom did God vow that they would not enter a state of rest with Him? [Was it not] those who were disobedient to Him? **19)** And [so] we see that they were not able to enter [a state of rest with God] because of [their] unbelief.

CHAPTER FOUR

1) So, as long as God's promise of entering into a state of rest

with Him [still] remains, we should fear that someone among you will appear [in the end] to have fallen short of [attaining] it. [Note: In this section "entering into rest" refers to Israel entering Canaan (verses 6, 8) and to Christians entering heaven (verses 3, 9). The "Sabbath day rest" is represented as a type of both]. **2)** For we [Christians] have had the good news [about resting with God] preached to us, just as the Israelites [had good news proclaimed to them. See 1:16-19]. But the message they heard did not benefit them, because it was not coupled with faith by those who heard it. **3)** Now we who have believed [will someday] enter that rest, even as God has said [Psa. 95:11], "So, I vowed in my anger, 'They will not enter a state of rest with me,'" although God's works were completed since the creation of the world. **4)** For God said this somewhere about the seventh day [Gen. 2:2], "And on the seventh day God rested from all His work." **5)** And again, this [is recorded, Psa. 95:11], "They will not enter a state of rest with me." **6)** So, since it still remains for some people to enter into that rest, but those to whom the good news was previously proclaimed [See verse 2] failed to enter it because of disobedience [See 3:18] **7)** God again identified a certain day, [calling it] "Today," in David's [writings], a long time later (just as it was referred to above) [Psa. 95:7-8], "Today, if you hear His [i.e., God's] voice, do not have a stubborn heart." **8)** For if Joshua had given the Israelites rest, God would not have spoken about another day later on [i.e., "Today" in Psa. 95:7]. **9)** [So] then, a Sabbath "rest day" [still] remains for God's people [i.e., for Christians, in heaven]. **10)** For the person who has entered into a state of rest with God has rested from his own work also, just as God rested from His. **11)** So, we should do our best to enter into that state of rest, so that no one fails [to do so] by following the same example of disobedience [i.e., as seen in the Israelites. See verses 2, 6].

12) For God's word is alive and active and sharper than any double-edged sword. It penetrates [deep enough] even to divide [a person's] soul [from his] spirit, and his joints [from his] bone marrow [Note: This is figurative language describing the penetrating effect of God's word into a person's spiritual, inner being] and is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of a person's heart. **13)** And no created being is hidden from God's sight, but everything is laid bare and is openly visible to the eyes of God, to whom we must give account.

14) Since then we [Christians] have [such] a great Head Priest, who has passed through the skies [i.e., ascended to heaven. See

Acts 1:9], Jesus, the Son of God, we should remain true to our profession [of faith in Him]. 15) For we do not have a head priest who is incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but One [i.e., Jesus] who has been tempted in every way that we have, and yet without sinning. 16) So, we should approach, with confidence, God's throne of unearned favor, so we can receive mercy and obtain that favor to help us when we need it.

CHAPTER FIVE

1) For every head priest is chosen from among men, and is appointed on behalf of people, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2) He is able to gently put up with ignorant and wayward people because he himself is subject to [the same spiritual] weaknesses. 3) And because of this he is obligated to offer [sacrifices] for his own sins also, as well as the people's sins. 4) And no one takes on himself the honor [of head priest], but [he is appointed only] when he is called by God, as was the case with Aaron. 5) So, Christ also did not take on Himself the honor of becoming head priest, but God said to Him [Psa. 2:7], "You are my Son; today I have conceived you." 6) And He says in another place [Psa. 110:4], "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." [Note: This is the first mention of this mysterious Old Testament priest who, throughout this book, is represented as a type of Christ].

7) During His life on earth Jesus offered up prayers and special requests with loud crying and tears to God, who was able to save Him from dying, and He was heard because of His [earnest] devotion [to God]. 8) [And] although He was a Son, still He learned obedience from the things He suffered, 9) and after becoming perfectly [qualified], He became the source of never ending salvation to all those who obey Him. 10) [So], God declared Him to be a Head Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

11) [Now] we have many things to say about Melchizedek, but because of your slowness to grasp things, they are hard to explain. 12) For certainly enough time has elapsed so that [by now] you ought to be teachers, [but instead] you are in need of having someone teach you again the basic principles of God's message. You have become people who need "milk" and not "solid food." [Note: The fundamental truths of Christianity are here figuratively spoken of as "milk," while the more advanced teaching, such as Christ's priesthood being like Melchizedek's, is called "solid food"]. 13) For

everyone who has to drink "milk" is inexperienced in the teaching about righteousness, for he is [still] a [spiritual] baby. 14) But "solid food" is for mature people, who because of using their [spiritual] senses, have become able to distinguish good from evil.

CHAPTER SIX

1) So, we should leave the basic principles of Christ's teaching and go on to maturity. [We should] not lay again a foundation of repentance [i.e., turning away] from deeds of death [i.e., acts that lead to spiritual death or that spring from a spiritually dead person], and of faith in God; 2) and of teaching about immersions [Note: The use of the plural word here suggests teaching on the distinctions between Jewish washings and John's and Christian immersion, whether in water or the Holy Spirit. See Acts 19:1-7], and about placing hands on people [Note: This act was practiced in the appointment of church leaders, in healing sick people and to impart supernatural gifts], and about people being raised from the dead and about never ending judgment. 3) And we will do so [i.e., go on to more advanced teaching] if God allows us to.

4)-6) For it is impossible to get people who have [completely] fallen away [from God] to repent again, because they [continue to] crucify for themselves God's Son all over again, and hold Him up to contempt. 4) [These are people] who were once enlightened [by the Gospel message], who had experienced the gift from heaven [i.e., forgiveness, never ending life, etc. See Rom. 6:23], who had partaken of the Holy Spirit [See Acts 2:38], 5) and who had experienced the good teaching of God and the powers of the coming age [i.e., they had already received some of the blessings of the Christian life, perhaps even miraculous signs]. 7) For God blesses land that has soaked up the rain which has fallen on it, and it produces a profitable crop for those people for whom the land was farmed. 8) But if the land produces [only] thorns and thistles, it is worthless and in danger of being cursed [by God], and will end up being burned.

9) But, my dearly loved ones, even though we talk this way, we are persuaded that you will do better than that [i.e., you will not fall away from God], and will end up being saved. 10) For God is not [so] unjust as to forget the work you are doing and the love you have shown for Him, as you ministered to the saints [i.e., His holy people] and continue to minister [to them]. 11) And it is our desire that each

one of you shows the same eagerness [to live for Christ], so as to be fully assured of your hope [in never ending life] until the end [of your days]. 12) We do not want you people to be [spiritually] slack, but to imitate those who will inherit [God's] promises because of their faith and patience.

13) For when God made a promise to Abraham, since He could not make a vow by anyone greater, He vowed by Himself, 14) saying [Gen. 22:16-17], "I will certainly bless you and will multiply [your descendants]." 15) And so, after waiting patiently, Abraham received what [God] had promised.

16) For people make vows by someone greater [than themselves], and an argument is settled when someone takes an oath [that he is telling the truth]. 17) Since God wanted to show conclusively to those who would inherit the promise [i.e., Abraham and all of his spiritual descendants], how unchangeable His purpose was, He confirmed it with an oath. 18) He did this so that by two unchangeable things [i.e., His promise and His oath], (and it is impossible for God to lie), we, who have fled [to God] for refuge, could be greatly encouraged to take hold of the hope set before us [i.e., the hope of never ending life]. 19) We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, [a hope] that is safe and secure, and one that enters the curtain [i.e., figuratively, of the heavenly sanctuary], 20) where Jesus, our forerunner, [already] entered on our behalf, having become a Head Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1) For this Melchizedek was king of Salem [Note: This probably refers to Jerusalem], and a priest of the Most High God. He met Abraham returning [from battle] when he defeated the kings [See Gen. 14:1ff] and blessed him. 2) Abraham measured out one tenth of everything he had [taken in battle] and gave it to Melchizedek. (Now "Melchizedek" means, first of all, "King of Righteousness," and then [since he was] King of Salem, it also means "King of Peace"). 3) He was without a father, or mother or a list of ancestors [i.e., there was no record of his family tree] and no [record of his] birth or death. Like the Son of God, he [appeared to] remain a priest perpetually.

4) Now consider how great this man was, to whom the

patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of what he had taken [in battle]. 5) For indeed, the descendants of Levi, who are appointed to the priesthood, are commanded by the law of Moses to collect a tenth [of the income] of the Israelites, who are their brothers, even though these brothers are [also] descendants of Abraham. 6) But Melchizedek, whose ancestry is not traced from the Levites, has collected a tenth [of the spoils] from Abraham, and blessed him who had received promises [from God]. 7) Without question [then], the lesser [of these two persons] is blessed by the greater one. 8) And in the one case, men here [on earth, that is, the Levites] who die, collect a tenth [from the rest of the Israelites], but there [i.e., in the case of Melchizedek, it is collected by someone about whom it is declared [by Scripture] that he continues to live. 9) And, so to speak, Levi, who collected a tenth [from the Israelites], paid a tenth through Abraham, 10) for when Melchizedek met him, he was still in Abraham's body [i.e., Levi had not been born as a descendant of Abraham as yet].

11) So, if perfection [i.e., a right relationship with God] could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood, (for under it people had received the law of Moses), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise, according to the order of Melchizedek, who was not considered "according to the order of Aaron"? 12) For with the changing of the priesthood, it was necessary for a change to be made in the law also. 13) For the Lord [See next verse], about whom these things are being said, belonged to another tribe, from which no one has [ever] been appointed to serve at the Altar. 14) For it is quite evident that our Lord has descended from Judah, a tribe about which Moses said nothing concerning priests. 15) And this is even clearer if another priest like Melchizedek arises, 16) who was not appointed on the basis of human regulations governing one's physical ancestry, but on the strength of One whose life never ends. 17) For it is declared [about Jesus in the Scriptures, Psa. 110:4], "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

18) For on one hand, the previous command [i.e., the law of Moses] was set aside because it was weak and useless, 19) (since the law did not make anything [i.e., anyone] perfect), but on the other hand, there is the introduction of a better hope [which did bring perfection through Christ], by which we draw near to God. 20) And this was not done without the taking of an oath [by God], 21) (for

[Levitical] priests were appointed without [God] taking [such] an oath, but Christ was appointed with an oath by God when He said to Him [Psa. 110:4], "The Lord made a vow and will not change His mind [when He said], 'You are a priest forever')." **22)** So therefore, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better Agreement [between God and mankind].

23) And on one hand, many people were appointed to be [Levitical] priests because they were prevented by death from continuing [to serve], [Note: The idea is that Levitical priests had to be constantly replaced], **24)** but on the other hand, Jesus has a permanent priesthood because He lives forever. **25)** So, He is also able to save completely those people who approach God through Him, since He lives forever to intercede [i.e., to plead to God] on their behalf.

26) For Jesus was a very suitable head priest for us [i.e., He meets our needs very well], because He was holy, innocent, without [moral] corruption, separated from sinners and [exalted] above the heavens. **27)** He does not need to offer up [animal] sacrifices every day like those head priests did [Note: The head priest here is represented as being in charge of the daily sacrifices offered by the other priests], first for His own sins and then for the people's sins. For He did this once for all time when He offered up Himself [on the cross]. **28)** For the law of Moses appoints [morally] weak men to be head priests, but the message of [God's] oath, which came after that law [Note: The quotation from Psa. 110:4 (See verse 21) was written after the law of Moses was given] appointed the Son, who was made perfect [in every way] forever.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1) Now this is the main point [or, the summary] of what we are saying: We have such a head priest [i.e., as described in chapter 7] who sat down at the right side of the throne of the Majesty [i.e., God] in heaven. **2)** He is a minister in the sanctuary, [serving about holy things] in the true tabernacle, which was set up by the Lord and not by man [Note: This sanctuary/tabernacle represents either heaven or the church]. **3)** For every head priest [on earth] is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, so it is necessary that this Head Priest [i.e., Jesus] also have something to offer. **4)** Now if He were [still] on earth, He would not be a priest [at all], since there are [already] those [on earth] who offer gifts according to the law of Moses. **5)** These priests serve [in a

sanctuary] that is [only] a copy and a foreshadow of the heavenly one. Now Moses was warned [by God] when he was about to build the Tabernacle, for God said [Ex. 25:40], "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain [i.e., Mount Sinai]." 6) But now Jesus has obtained a ministry that is as far superior [to that of the Levitical priesthood] as the [New] Agreement, of which He is the Mediator, is better [than the old one], because it has been enacted on better promises.

7) For if that first Agreement had been faultless, then there would have been no need for a second one. 8) For God found fault with the Israelites [or, possibly with the first Agreement], saying [Jer. 31:31ff], "Look, the Lord says, the time will come when I will make a New Agreement with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. 9) [It will] not be like the Agreement that I made with their forefathers on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the country of Egypt. For they did not [continue to] keep my Agreement, so I did not regard them [as acceptable], says the Lord. 10) For this is the Agreement that I will make with the people of Israel in the coming days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and I will also write them on their hearts. And I will be their God and they will be my people. 11) And everyone will not [have to] teach his neighbor or his brother [anymore], telling them to 'Know the Lord,' because all of them will know me [as their Lord], from the least [important] ones to the most important ones. 12) For I will be merciful to their wickedness [i.e., by forgiving them] and I will not remember their sins anymore." 13) [So], by saying "a New Agreement," God has made the first one obsolete. And that which is becoming obsolete and getting aged is ready to [completely] disappear.

CHAPTER NINE

1) Now even the first Agreement had regulations for [governing] service [to God] and an earthly sanctuary. 2) For the Tabernacle was constructed with its outer compartment containing the lampstand and the table and the Bread of Presence. This was called the "Holy Place." 3) And behind the second curtain [of] the Tabernacle was [a room] called the "Holy of Holies." 4) It had a golden altar for [burning] incense [in it], and [originally] the gold-

plated Chest of the Agreement, containing a golden jar of manna, Aaron's staff that sprouted buds and the tablets of the Agreement. 5) Above it were the cherubim [Note: These were winged, angelic-like, golden figurines] spread out over the [Chest] covering, where sins were [symbolically] forgiven. But we cannot now speak of these things in detail. 6) Now after preparing these things [i.e., the table, incense, etc.], the priests regularly enter the outer room of the Tabernacle [i.e., the Holy Place] to carry out the duties of their service. 7) But [only] once a year the head priest goes alone into the inner room [i.e., Holy of Holies], and never without [animal] blood, which he offers [as a sacrifice] for himself and for the sins done in ignorance by the people. 8) [By his doing this] the Holy Spirit signifies that the way into the Holy Place [Note: This actually refers to the Holy of Holies, and represents heaven] had not yet been disclosed [i.e., made accessible] while the first Tabernacle was still standing. 9) [That Tabernacle] is symbolic of the present time, [indicating] that both gifts and [animal] sacrifices, which are offered [by the priests], are not able to give the worshiper a clear conscience 10) since, with foods and drinks and various [ceremonial] washings, they are only outward regulations imposed until the time when everything would be made right [i.e., under the New Agreement].

11) But when Christ became the Head Priest of the good things that have come, He entered the greater and more complete Tabernacle, not made by hand, that is, not part of this creation [i.e., heaven, See 8:2]. 12) And He did not enter [the heavenly Holy of Holies] by means of the blood of goats and calves but, by means of His own blood, He entered the Holy of Holies [i.e., heaven] once for all time, [after] having obtained never ending redemption [i.e., salvation for us on the cross]. 13) For if the blood of goats and bulls, and a [burnt] heifer's ashes sprinkled on people who had been [ceremonially] defiled, could purify them so as to make them [ceremonially] clean on the outside, 14) how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Holy Spirit [or, His eternal Spirit] offered Himself without [moral] blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from deeds which lead to [spiritual] death to serve the living God?

15) Therefore, Christ is the Mediator of a New Agreement, so that [all] those people who have been called [by God] can receive the promise of the never ending inheritance. [This is possible

because] a death has taken place for the redemption of [people's] sins who lived under the first Agreement. 16) For where a will exists, it is necessary to prove the death of the person who made it [i.e., in order to benefit by its provisions]. 17) For a will is in force [only] when there has been a death; for it is not in effect as long as the one who made it is [still] alive. 18) Therefore, even the first Agreement was not ratified without blood [i.e., without a death taking place]. 19) For after Moses had declared every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats and [mixed it] with water, then sprinkled both the scroll [of the Agreement] and all the people with a hyssop branch covered by red wool [dipped in the mixture]. 20) He said [Ex. 29:8], "This is the blood of the Agreement, which God commanded you [to observe]." 21) In the same way he also sprinkled blood on the Tabernacle and all of the utensils used in its ministry. 22) And, according to the law of Moses, almost everything is [ceremonially] cleansed by blood, for there is no forgiveness [of sins] apart from the shedding of blood.

23) Therefore, it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things [i.e., the Tabernacle, its furniture and utensils, etc.] to be [ceremonially] cleansed by these things [i.e., the blood of animal sacrifices], but the heavenly things themselves [i.e., the church, both on earth and in heaven] require better sacrifices than these [i.e., the sacrifice of Christ]. 24) For Christ did not enter the Holy of Holies made by hand, which is [only] a counterpart of the true one, but into heaven itself, where He now appears in God's presence for us. [See verse 12]. 25) Nor was it necessary for Him to offer Himself [to God] often, like the head priest does, who enters the Holy of Holies year after year with blood that belongs to others [i.e., the blood of animal sacrifices]. 26) For then He would have had to suffer often since the creation of the world; but now at the end of the ages [i.e., the final period of world history] He has been revealed once [for all] to remove sin by sacrificing Himself. 27) And just as it is destined for people to die one time, and [then] after that to be judged, 28) so Christ also, who was once [for all] offered [as a sacrifice] to take away the sins of many people, will come back a second time, not to take away sin, [but] to provide salvation to those who are waiting for Him.

CHAPTER TEN

1) For the law of Moses was [only] a foreshadow of the good things that [were] to come [i.e., in the Messianic age], not the exact image of those things. It can never, by the same sacrifices, continually offered year after year, make [morally] perfect those who draw near [to God in worship]. 2) If it could, would not those sacrifices have stopped being offered [by now], since the worshipers would have been [ceremonially] cleansed and would not have had a sense of guilt anymore? 3) But those sacrifices were [only] a reminder of [the people's] sins year after year, 4) because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

5) Therefore, when Christ came into the world, He said [to God], [Psa. 40:6-8 LXX], "You did not want an [animal] sacrifice and an offering, but you prepared a body for me [to sacrifice]. 6) You were not pleased with whole burnt offerings and sin offerings. 7) Then I said, 'Look, I have come to do what you want, O God, [just as] it is written in the scroll of the book [about me].'" 8) [After] saying the above, "You did not want, nor were you pleased, with [peace] sacrifices and [meal] offerings and whole burnt offerings and sin offerings," [although] these are offered according to the law of Moses, 9) He then said, "Look, I have come to do what you want." [So], Christ takes away the first [i.e., the animal and grain sacrifices] in order to establish the second [i.e., the sacrifice of Himself]. 10) By [Christ doing] what God wanted we have been set aside for God through Jesus Christ offering His body once for all time.

11) For every priest stands and performs his service day after day, offering over and over the same sacrifices which can never take away sins. 12) But when this Priest [i.e., Christ] had offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, He sat down at the right side of God. 13) From that time onward He will wait until His enemies are placed [in full subjection] under His feet. 14) For by one offering [i.e., the sacrifice of Himself], Christ has made perfect forever those people who are being set apart for God.

15) And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for He said, first of all, 16) [Jer. 31:33f], "The Lord says, this is the Agreement I will make with them [i.e., with my people] after those days. I will put my laws in their hearts and I will write them on their minds." Then He

said, 17) "And I will not remember their sins or their wickedness anymore." 18) Now where forgiveness of sins has taken place, there is no longer [a need for an] offering for sin.

19) Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Holy of Holies [i.e., heaven] by means of the blood of Jesus, 20) by means of a new and living way which He opened for us through the curtain of His physical body, 21) and since we have a great Priest [who is] over God's household [i.e., Christ], 22) we should draw close [to God] with a sincere heart and a fully assured faith, having had our hearts sprinkled from a guilty conscience [See 9:13-14] and having had our bodies washed with clean water [i.e., in our immersion]. 23) [So], we should hold on firmly to the profession of our hope [in God], without wavering from it, for God is faithful to His promises. 24) And we should consider how we can stir up one another to love [more] and to perform good deeds. 25) We should not neglect our assembling together [as a church], as some people are in the habit of doing, but we should encourage one another [spiritually], and [do it] all the more [diligently] as you see the day [of judgment] coming closer.

26) For if we go on sinning intentionally, after we have received the full knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for [our] sins. 27) Instead, [there will be] a fearful expectation of [coming] judgment and of [God's] raging fire which will consume His enemies. 28) The person who has disregarded the law of Moses is put to death without being shown mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29) How much more severely do you think a person deserves to be punished who has trampled on the Son of God and has regarded the blood of the [New] Agreement, with which he was set apart for God, an unholy thing and has insulted the Holy Spirit, through whom God's unearned favor is shown? 30) For we know God, who said [Deut. 32:35], "Revenge belongs to me; I will pay back [for wrongdoing]." And again [Deut. 32:36], "The Lord will judge His people." 31) It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32) But remember the earlier days when, after you were enlightened [to the truth], you endured a difficult struggle by having to suffer [much]. 33) Sometimes you were subjected to public ridicule and abuse, and at other times you shared [vicariously] with those people who were treated that way. 34) For you showed sympathy for

those who were in prison and accepted it joyfully when your [own] possessions were taken away, [because] you knew that you yourselves had a better and more permanent possession [in heaven].

35) [So], do not throw away your confidence, because it pays a rich reward. 36) For you need to be steadfast so that, after you have done what God wants, you will receive the promise [of an inheritance. See 9:15]. 37) [Hab. 2:3-4 LXX says], "For [it will be] only a short time [before] He [i.e., Christ], who is coming, will be here without delay. 38) But my [i.e., God's] righteous person will [obtain] life by [his] faith [in God]. But if he turns back [from me], my soul is not pleased with him." 39) But we are not like those people who turn back and are destroyed, but like those who have faith [in God] and obtain the salvation of their souls.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) Now, [having] faith is being sure of [receiving] what is hoped for, and certain [of the existence] of what is not visible. 2) For the men of old [i.e., the forefathers. See 1:1], received [God's] approval [for their faith].

3) By [having] faith, we understand that the universe was formed by God's word [See Gen. 1:1-27], so that what is seen has not been made out of what is visible.

4) By [having] faith, Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain did. [And] because of his faith he was commended by God for being righteous, when God expressed approval of his offerings. By means of his faith, Abel still speaks [to us], even though he is dead.

5) By [having] faith, Enoch was taken [to be with God], so that he did not have to die. And he could not be found because God had taken him away. For he had been commended [by God] before he was taken away, that he had pleased God. [Note: The Hebrew of Gen. 5:24 says, "he walked with God"]. 6) And unless one has faith, it is impossible for him to be pleasing to God, for the person who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.

7) By [having] faith, when Noah had been warned [by God] about conditions that had not yet been seen [i.e., regarding events of the coming Flood], he acted out of reverent concern [for God] by constructing a ship to save [i.e., rescue] his household [from the

Flood waters]. By this [i.e., his faith which led to action], Noah condemned the world and inherited righteousness because of his faith.

8) By [having] faith, when Abraham was called [by God] to leave [his homeland] and go to a place he would later receive as an inheritance [i.e., Palestine], he obeyed God and went out, not knowing where he was going. 9) By [having] faith, he became an alien in the foreign country that had been promised to him. He lived in tents, along with Isaac [his son] and Jacob [his grandson], who [also] were to receive the same inheritance he had been promised. 10) For he was looking forward to [living in] a city with [lasting] foundations, designed and built by God. [Note: This undoubtedly refers to heaven].

11) By [having] faith, Sarah herself received the ability to have children, even though she was [sterile, being] past the age of child-bearing, since she considered God faithful to His promise. [Note: Some translations consider "Abraham" to be the subject of this highly controversial verse. See Lightfoot, pages 222-225]. 12) Therefore, from one man [Abraham], who was as good as dead [i.e., because of having a sterile wife], were born descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the [grains of] sand on the seashore.

13) These people [all] continued to have faith until they died, [even though] they had not obtained [all] the things God had promised, but had [only] seen them and welcomed them from a distance. And they had confessed to being strangers and aliens on earth. 14) For those who say such things make it obvious that they are looking for a country of their own [i.e. heaven]. 15) And indeed, if they had remembered [with longing] the country they had left, they would have had the opportunity to return to it. 16) But instead, they longed for a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

17) By [having] faith, when Abraham was tested [by God], he offered Isaac [as a sacrifice]. [Even though] he had received the promises [of having many descendants], he was ready to offer his only conceived [and eventually born] son, 18) [even though] he had been told [by God, Gen. 21:12], "Your descendants will be traced through Isaac." 19) [So], he reasoned that God was able to raise up [Isaac] from the dead, which, in a sense, he did receive him back [from the dead].

20) By [having] faith, Isaac pronounced a future blessing on Jacob and Esau. [See Gen. 27:26-40].

21) By [having] faith, Jacob blessed each of Joseph's sons just before he died, and bowed in worship [to God] while leaning on the top of his staff.

22) By [having] faith, when Joseph was about to die, he mentioned the Israelites' departure [from Egypt] and gave [them] instructions concerning his bones [i.e., that they were to take them back to Palestine. See Gen. 50:25].

23) By [having] faith, Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born because they saw that he was a handsome child, and they were not afraid of the king's decree [to destroy all male Hebrew children].

24) By [having] faith, when Moses was grown up, he refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25) but chose rather to suffer mistreatment with God's people [i.e., the Israelites] than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a brief time. 26) He considered suffering ridicule for Christ's sake to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking forward to his reward. 27) By [having] faith, he left Egypt, not being afraid of the king's anger, for he endured [all the rigors of wandering in the desert] because he could see the invisible God. 28) By [having] faith, he established the Passover Festival [Note: This festival was first celebrated in Egypt by the fleeing Israelites, then observed annually in commemoration of that event], and had [lambs'] blood sprinkled [on the door jambs] to prevent the one who destroyed the firstborn children from touching them. [See Ex. 12:23].

29) By [having] faith, the Israelites passed [safely] through the Red Sea as if it were dry ground, but when the Egyptians attempted to do it, they were drowned.

30) By [the people having] faith, the walls of Jericho fell in response to their marching around them for seven days.

31) By [having] faith, Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed along with the disobedient [inhabitants of Jericho] because she welcomed the [twelve] spies in peace.

32) And what more shall I say? For time would fail me if I were to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and [all] the prophets, 33) who, by [having] faith, conquered kingdoms, practiced what was right, and obtained what was promised [by God]. They shut the mouths of lions, 34) they put out raging fires,

and they escaped being killed by swords. They were strengthened when weak, became mighty in battle, and defeated foreign armies. **35)** Women received their dead [loved ones] back to life. Others were tortured but refused to be rescued, so they could obtain a better resurrection. **36)** And [still] others experienced mockings and floggings, and were even chained up and put in prison. **37)** They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were executed by the sword. They traveled around in sheepskin and goatskin clothing; they were destitute, afflicted and mistreated. **38)** (The world did not deserve such people). They wandered in deserts and mountains, [living] in caves and [even] holes in the ground. **39)** And all of these people were commended [by God] for their faith, yet did not receive [all of] what was promised to them, **40)** because God had planned to give us something better [that they got], so that they would not be complete without us. [Note: The idea here is that these faithful people of Old Testament times did not receive the fullest of blessings until Christ came to make them available to both them and us together].

CHAPTER TWELVE

1) Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a large crowd of spectators [Note: Christians are pictured here as being in a crowded arena, performing in the games], we should lay aside every [excessive] weight and sin that so easily entangles us, and with perseverance, we should run the race [of life] that lies before us. **2)** We should fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and completer of the [or, "our"] faith. [Note: Jesus is here pictured as the one who completely fulfills the life of faith, or who provides us with the ability to live such a life]. [And] because He could look forward to joy, He endured the cross, despising its shame, and has sat down at the right side of God's throne. **3)** Now think about how Jesus endured such opposition against Himself from sinners, so that you do not grow weary and become discouraged [yourself]. **4)** You have not yet resisted to the point of [shedding] blood in your struggle against sin. **5)** And have you forgotten the exhortation that was addressed to you as sons? [Prov. 3:11f says], "My son, do not take the discipline of the Lord lightly, and do not get discouraged when He rebukes you. **6)** For the Lord disciplines those He loves, and punishes every child He accepts." **7)** [For the suffering] you are enduring [is] for your discipline. God is dealing with you as He does with [His] children,

for what child is not disciplined by his father? **8)** But if you do not receive [such] discipline, like all of us do, then you are illegitimate children and not true children. **9)** Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them [for it]; should we not much rather submit to the Father of our spirits [i.e., God], so we can live [spiritually]? **10)** For our human fathers disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them; but God disciplines us for our [spiritual] good, so that we may share in His holiness. **11)** No discipline seems pleasant, but painful, at the time [it is received], yet later on it produces a crop of peace and righteousness in [the lives of] those who have been trained by it.

12) Therefore, [Prov. 4:26 says], "Strengthen your limp hands and weak knees; **13)** make straight paths for your feet," so that crippled limbs will not remain [permanently] disabled, but rather will be healed. [Note: The idea here is "remove all barriers to spiritual growth so you can live a faithful life"].

14) Actively seek to live in peace with all people. And be dedicated to God, because no one will see God without this. **15)** Look carefully [at how you are living] so that no one falls away from God's unearned favor, and that no "poisonous plant sprouts up" to cause trouble and corrupt many people [Note: This is an analogy from Deut. 29:16-18 being used as a warning against the evil influence of wicked people], **16)** and that no one becomes immoral or ungodly, like Esau, who sold his right to the firstborn son's inheritance for a single meal. **17)** For you recall how, even after he [later] wanted to inherit the blessing, Esau was rejected [by his father Isaac. See Gen. 37:35-40]. For he was not able to get his father to change his mind, even though he tearfully begged him [or, "he was not able to change the situation, even though he shed tears over his loss"].

18) [Unlike the Israelites at Mount Sinai] you [Christians] have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that burned with fire [See Ex. 19:12, 16-19; 20:18-21; Deut. 4:11]; to [a place of] darkness, gloom and wind; **19)** to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words [from God] that the hearers begged not to have to listen to [anymore]. [See Ex. 20:19]. **20)** For those people could not stand [hearing] the command [Ex. 19:12f], "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned [to death]." **21)** And the sight [of all these things] was so terrifying that Moses said [See Deut. 9:19], "I tremble with fear."

22) But you [Christians] have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God [Note: These terms describe people who have entered a spiritual relationship with God as part of the church]. [You have come] to a praise gathering of innumerable angels [Note: Christians are here pictured as assembled in worship of God, along with angels], **23)** and to the church of the firstborn ones [i.e., those who have received an inheritance from their Father], whose names are recorded in heaven. [See Luke 10:20]. [You have come] to God, who is the Judge of all people, and to the spirits of righteous people who have become [morally] perfect [i.e., that great company of God's people who have gone on to their heavenly reward], **24)** and to Jesus, the Mediator of a New Agreement [between God and mankind], and to the sprinkled blood [of Jesus], which says better things [to us] than [the blood of] Abel did. [Note: The contrast seems to be that "Abel's blood called for vengeance and death (See Gen. 4:10) whereas the blood of Christ provides mercy and life"].

25) Pay careful attention so that you do not refuse [to hear] God when He speaks to you. [See verse 9]. For if those people [i.e., the Israelites] did not escape [judgment] when they refused [to hear] Him who warned them on earth [i.e., God speaking through Moses at Mount Sinai], how much less [likely] will we escape [judgment] if we reject Him who warns from heaven [i.e., Christ]? **26)** God's voice shook the earth at that time, but now He has promised, saying [Hag. 2:6], "I will cause not only the earth to shake once more, but also heaven [as well]." **27)** Now the words, "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken --- that is, the created universe --- so that those things which cannot be shaken will remain. [Note: These "things" have been variously interpreted to be eternal truth, the heavenly kingdom, the new heavens and earth, etc.].

28) Therefore, we should be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken [i.e., the church. See Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:6, 9]. So, with reverence and awe, we should serve God in a way that pleases Him, for our God is truly a consuming fire.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) Continue to love [one another] as brothers. **2)** Do not forget to show hospitality toward strangers, for by doing this, some people have entertained angels without realizing it. **3)** Remember [to pray for and help] those who are in prison, as though you

[yourselves] were in prison with them. [Remember] those who are being mistreated, realizing that you [yourselves] also share [with them] a physical body [i.e., you are subject to the same kind of trials].

4) Marriage should be considered honorable among all people and its sexual responsibilities should be faithfully kept. For God will judge [and condemn] those people who are sexually immoral and who are sexually unfaithful to their mates. 5) Keep your lives free from the love of money [and be] content with what you have, because God [Himself] has said [Deut. 31:6], "By no means will I [ever] desert you or give up on you." 6) So, we can say with confidence [Psa. 118:6], "[Since] the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid [of] what people might do to me" [or, "what (harm) can people do to me?"]

7) Remember your leaders who told you God's message [Note: This probably refers to former preachers who had since died]. Consider the outcome of the way they lived and imitate their faith. 8) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

9) Do not continue to be swept off your course by all kinds of strange teachings. For it is good for your hearts to be strengthened by God's unearned favor [upon you] and not by [keeping regulations about] foods, which do not benefit those who observe them. 10) [Now] we [Christians] have an altar [i.e., the sacrifice of Christ] from which people who serve in the Tabernacle [i.e., the Jews] have no right to eat. 11) For the blood of the animals offered as sacrifices for sin is brought by the head priest into the Holy of Holies, [but] their bodies are burned outside of the camp. 12) Therefore, Jesus also suffered outside of the gate [i.e., of Jerusalem] so that He could make people holy through [the shedding of] His own blood. 13) So, we should go out to Him, outside of the camp [Note: This probably signifies separating from the whole system of Judaism, as well as full commitment to Christ], bearing the abuse that He suffered. 14) For we do not have a lasting city here on earth [i.e., such as Jerusalem] but we are looking for the city to come [i.e., heaven. See 10:11].

15) [So], through Jesus then, we should continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the expression of our lips as we confess His name [to be our Lord]. 16) But do not forget to do good deeds and share [with others], for God is very pleased with such "sacrifices." 17) [You should] obey your leaders [Note: This probably refers to church elders] and submit to their oversight, for they look out for [the welfare of] your souls as men who will give an accounting [for your

spiritual progress]. [Be obedient], so that they will be able to do this joyfully and not with sorrow, for that would be unprofitable to you.

18) Pray for us [continually]. We are convinced that we [i.e., the writer of Hebrews] have a clear conscience [i.e., regarding our relationship to you] and we want to behave properly in every way.

19) And I urge you people earnestly to do this [i.e., pray for me], so that I can be sent back to you sooner [i.e., by God's providence].

20) Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep [i.e., the church], through the blood of the never ending Agreement [i.e., Christ's blood], **21)** equip you with every good deed for doing God's will. [May He] work in us [to accomplish] what is very pleasing in His sight through [the power of] Jesus Christ. May there be praise to Him forever and ever. May it be so.

22) But I urge you, brothers [and sisters], listen to these words of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. **23)** I want you people to know that our brother Timothy has been released [from prison?]. If he comes [to me] soon, I will bring him with me when I visit you.

24) Greet all of those who are your leaders, and all the saints [i.e., God's holy people]. Those [brothers] from Italy send you their greetings.

25) May God's unearned favor be with all of you. May it be so.

JAMES

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, [who sends] greetings to the twelve tribes which are scattered throughout the world. [Note: This refers to Christians, probably of Jewish descent].

2) Consider it [an occasion for] much joy, my brothers, when you experience various trials, 3) because you [should] know that when your faith is tested, it produces perseverance. 4) And you [should] allow your perseverance to complete its work, so that you will be perfect and complete, [and] not lacking in anything.

5) But if any one of you lacks wisdom, he should pray to God, who gives to everyone generously and does not begrudge [the person who asks], and it will be given to him. 6) But he should ask in faith, without doubting, because the person who doubts [that he will receive wisdom] is like an ocean wave that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7) For that [doubting] person should not think that he will receive anything from the Lord [through prayer], 8) because he is double-minded and undecided in all that he does [i.e., he cannot make up his mind and follow through about anything].

9) But the person [who must live] in humble circumstances should be happy over being lifted up [spiritually by God]. 10) And the wealthy person [should be happy] that he is humbled [by God], because he will pass away like a flower [blossoming] from grass. 11) For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass [so that] its flower [blossoms] fall off, and its beautiful appearance is destroyed. In the same way, the wealthy person will fade away as he goes about his business [affairs].

12) The person who perseveres under trials is blessed, because when he has been approved by God, he will receive the crown of [never ending] life, which God has promised to those who love Him.

13) No one should say when he is tempted, "God is tempting me," because God cannot be tempted by evil and He does not tempt

anyone. 14) But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own evil desire. 15) Then, when the evil desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin. And when sin is fully grown, it produces [spiritual] death.

16) [So], do not be deceived, my dearly loved brothers. 17) Every good thing that is given and every perfect gift [received] is from above, coming down from the Father of [heavenly] lights, with whom there can be no change or shifting shadow [i.e., God always remains the same]. 18) It was God's purpose to bring us into being [spiritually] by the message of truth, so that we could become a kind of "firstfruits" of those He created. [Note: "Firstfruits" here suggests either that Christians are the best of all of God's creatures (Num. 18:12), or that they were the first to be converted, with many more to come].

19) You people [already] know this, my dearly loved brothers, [or, "you should know this"]. However, every person should be quick to listen, slow to talk and slow in becoming angry. 20) For the anger of people does not produce what God considers to be right. 21) Therefore, you should put away [from you] all moral filth and overflowing wickedness and humbly receive the word [of God], planted within you [by the Holy Spirit. See John 16:8], which is capable of saving your souls.

22) But you should not deceive yourselves by just listening [to God's word] instead of doing what the word teaches. 23) For if anyone is [only] a listener to the word and does not practice it, he is like a person who sees his natural face in a mirror, 24) and [then after] he sees himself, [he] goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25) But the person who looks closely into the perfect law that brings freedom, and continues to do so, is not a listener who forgets [what he hears], but someone who does the work [it requires]. This person will be blessed for doing so.

26) If anyone considers himself to be religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, this person's religion is worthless. 27) Religion that is pure and uncorrupted in the eyes of [our] God and Father involves taking care of orphans and widows in their distress and keeping oneself unstained by the world.

CHAPTER TWO

1) My brothers, do not hold [views regarding] the faith of our

glorious Lord Jesus Christ [i.e., as tenets of Christianity] which show favoritism toward [certain] persons. 2) For, suppose a person comes into your assembly wearing a gold ring and dressed in fine clothing and [then another] person comes in who is poor and dressed in shabby clothing. 3) Now if you people show special attention to the one wearing the fine clothing and say [to him], "You can sit here in this good seat," and to the poor person, "You stand over there," or "Sit on the floor by my feet," 4) are you not making class distinctions among yourselves and judging [people] from evil motives? 5) Listen, my dearly loved brothers; did not God choose those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be wealthy in faith and to inherit the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6) But you people have dishonored the poor person. Are not rich people the ones who oppress you and drag you to court? 7) Do they not speak against the honorable name by which you are called? [i.e., the name "Christ" or "Christian"]. 8) However, you are doing well if you fulfill [i.e., obey] the royal law found in the Scriptures [Lev. 19:18], "You should love your neighbor the same way that you love yourself." 9) But if you show favoritism toward [certain] persons, you are committing a sin and are convicted by the law [of God] as lawbreakers. 10) For, whoever observes the entire law [of God] and yet breaks one requirement [of it], becomes guilty of [breaking] all of it. 11) For God, who said [through Moses, Ex. 20:13f], "You must not be sexually unfaithful to your mate," also said, "You must not murder." Now if you are sexually faithful to your mate and yet murder [someone], you have become a lawbreaker.

12) So, you should speak and act as people who will be judged by a law that brings freedom. 13) For the person who has shown no mercy will be judged without mercy. [For] mercy wins out over condemnation.

14) What good is it, my brothers [and sisters], if a person says he has faith but does not have [good] deeds? Can such faith save him? 15) If a brother or sister is without [adequate] clothing and needs daily food, 16) and one of you says to him, "Go [and be] at peace; keep warm and eat well," and yet you do not give him anything for his physical needs, what good is that? 17) In the same way, if [your] faith does not have [good] deeds [to accompany it], it is dead, [because it stands] alone. 18) But someone may say, "You have faith and I have [good] deeds." [I reply], show me your faith

without your [good] deeds, and I will show you my faith by my [good] deeds. 19) You believe that there is [only] one God; that is good! Even the demons believe [that], and they shudder [with fear at the thought]. 20) But will you acknowledge, you foolish person, that faith without [good] deeds is useless? 21) Was not our forefather Abraham made right with God by deeds [of obedience] when he offered his son Isaac [as a sacrifice] on the Altar? 22) [Do you not] see that faith cooperated together with his deeds, and faith was made complete by [his] deeds? 23) So, the Scripture was fulfilled, which says [Gen. 15:6], "Abraham believed God and [so] God considered him righteous," and he was called God's friend. 24) [So], you see, it is by deeds that a person is made right with God, and not by faith alone.

25) And in the same way, was not the prostitute Rahab made right with God by [her] deeds when she welcomed [and protected] the messengers, and [then] sent them away by a different road? 26) For as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without [good] deeds is dead.

CHAPTER THREE

1) Not many of you should be teachers, my brothers, because you [should] know that we [teachers] will be judged more strictly. 2) For we all make mistakes in many areas [of life]. If anyone does not make a mistake in what he says, he is a perfect person, capable of keeping a tight rein on his whole life also.

3) Now if we put bits in the mouths of horses so that they will obey us, we can govern the direction of their entire bodies as well. 4) Look, even though ships are huge and are driven by strong winds, still their direction can be governed by a very small rudder, wherever the pilot desires to sail. 5) So, the tongue is a small part [of the body], yet it boasts of great accomplishments. Look at how large a forest is burned up by even a tiny spark. 6) And the tongue is [like] a fire [i.e., like that spark]. [For] the tongue, as a part of the body, is [like] the world of evil. It corrupts the entire life [of a person] and inflames the course of nature itself [i.e., it affects a person throughout his whole earthly existence], and is ignited by hell itself [i.e., the evil produced by the fiery tongue has hell as its source and destiny].

7) For all kinds of animals and birds and reptiles and ocean creatures are being subdued and have been subdued by mankind, 8) but no one can subdue the tongue. It is an uncontrollable [source of] evil and full of deadly poison. 9) We praise the Lord and Father with it, and [also] curse men who are created in God's likeness with it. 10) Praise and cursing come out of the same mouth! My brothers, these things should not be happening. 11) Does a spring produce [both] fresh water and salt water from the same opening? 12) My brothers, can a fig tree produce olives or a grapevine [produce] figs? Neither can a salt water [spring] produce fresh water.

13) Who [then] is the wise and understanding person among you? He should show by his good conduct [that he has] deeds of gentleness [stemming] from wisdom. 14) But if you people have bitter jealousy and rivalry in your hearts, do not be arrogant [over it] and deny the truth. 15) This "wisdom" is not the kind that comes from [God] above, but is earthly, unspiritual and demonic [i.e., it is motivated by an evil spirit and not the Holy Spirit]. 16) For when jealousy and rivalry exist, there is [also] disorder and every [kind of] evil practice.

17) But the [true] wisdom, which is from [God] above, is first of all pure, then peace-loving, patient and easily persuaded. [It is] full of mercy and produces a crop of good deeds; [it is] impartial [or, unwavering] and sincere. 18) [People who are] peacemakers sow [seeds of] peace and it produces a crop of righteousness [in the lives of others].

CHAPTER FOUR

1) Where do conflicts and fights among you come from? Do they not come from your [desire for] pleasures which produces inner conflict? 2) You people desire something and yet do not have it, [so] you murder [to get it]. You are envious [of what someone has] and [yet] are not able to obtain it, [so] you fight and quarrel [over it]. You do not have [what you want] because you do not ask [God for it]. 3) [When] you do ask, you do not receive it, because you ask from wrong motives, [just] so you can satisfy your own pleasures. 4) You people who have become unfaithful to God, do you not know that being [intimate] friends with the world [of sin] means hostility toward

God? Therefore, whoever determines to be an [intimate] friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5) Or, do you think that the Scripture says [this] for nothing [Note: No specific passage is here cited, but the idea occurs in several Old Testament passages]? "The Holy Spirit, whom God has made to live in us, longs jealously [for us to be faithful to God]." 6) But He gives [us] more unearned favor [i.e., to overcome the world]. Therefore, the Scripture says [Prov. 3:34], "God opposes proud people, but gives unearned favor to those who are humble."

7) So, you should submit yourselves to God, but oppose the devil, and he will flee from you. 8) Come close to God and He will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinful people [i.e., this is an exhortation to repent of moral and spiritual corruption], and purify your hearts, you double-minded people. 9) Be distressed and grieve and cry [over your sins]; your laughter should turn into grieving and your joy [should turn] into sorrow. 10) Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and He will exalt you people.

11) Do not slander one another, brothers, [for] the person who speaks against his brother, or judges him, is [guilty of] speaking against the law [of God]. But when you judge the law, you are not obeying it but acting as its judge. 12) There is only One Lawgiver and Judge [i.e., God or Christ]. It is He who is able to save and destroy [people]. So, who [do you think] you are, judging your neighbor?

13) Come on now, you people who are saying, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this [or that] city, spend a year there, do business and make some money." 14) [For actually] you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. What is your life? For you are [like] a mist that appears briefly and then vanishes. 15) Instead, you should be saying, "If it is what the Lord wants, we will live and do this or that." 16) But, as it is, you people are boasting in your arrogance [and] all such boasting is evil. 17) So, the person who knows the good [he ought] to be doing, but is not doing it, is sinning.

CHAPTER FIVE

1) Come on now, you rich people, cry and wail over the miseries that are coming upon you. 2) Your wealth has rotted and moths have eaten your clothing. 3) Your gold and silver have tarnished and their tarnish will be a testimony against you [i.e., you

have hoarded your wealth instead of using it to benefit others], and they will devour your flesh as fire [i.e., your riches will ultimately consume you]. You have hoarded up your riches in these last days. **4)** Look, the wages you have fraudulently refused to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out [against you]. And the cries of these harvest hands have reached the ears of the Lord of [heavenly] armies [i.e., Almighty God]. **5)** You people have basked in luxury [here] on earth and lived lives devoted to pleasure. You have fattened yourselves [as sacrificial oxen] for the day of slaughter. **6)** You have condemned and murdered the righteous man [i.e., the innocent person, See verse 4] and he does not [even] resist you.

7) So, be patient, brothers, until the Lord comes. Look, the farmer waits for his land to produce the valuable crop and is patient with it until it receives the fall and spring rains. **8)** [So], you people should be patient also; strengthen your hearts because the Lord's coming is near [Note: This may refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, or to Christ's final coming and judgment]. **9)** Do not complain against one another, brothers, so that you will not [have to] be judged [and condemned for it]. Look, the Judge [i.e., Christ] is standing at the door! [See verse 8]. **10)** Brothers, take the [Old Testament] prophets, who spoke in the name [i.e., by the authority] of the Lord, as your examples of suffering and patience. **11)** Notice that we consider those who endured [suffering with patience] to be blessed [by God]. You people have heard of Job's patience and have seen what the Lord finally did [for him]. The Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

12) But above everything else, my brothers, do not take oaths, not "by the heaven," nor "by the earth," nor by any other oath. But your "yes" should be [simply] "yes," and your "no," [simply] "no," so you do not fall under condemnation.

13) Is there anyone among you who is suffering? [If so], he should pray. Is anyone happy? [Then] he should sing a psalm. **14)** Is anyone among you sick? [Then] he should call for the elders of the church and they should pray for him, after pouring [olive] oil on him in the name [i.e., by the authority] of the Lord. **15)** And if their prayer is [offered] by faith, [God] will heal the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up [from his sickbed]. And if he had sinned, he will be forgiven for them [Note: This may imply that the man's sickness was the result of some sin. In any event, his forgiveness would follow his repentance]. **16)** So, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another to be healed [from sin

sickness]. The special request of a righteous person is empowered with [great] effectiveness. **17)** Elijah was a man with a similar nature as ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain [I Kings 17:1; 18:1], and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. **18)** Then he prayed again and the sky poured rain and the ground produced its crop.

19) My brothers, if anyone among you strays away from the truth [of God's inspired message], and someone brings him back [to it], **20)** that person should know that whoever brings a sinner back from the error of his way will save that soul from [spiritual] death and will cover over a large number of sins [i.e., the many sins of that person will become forgiven].

I PETER

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This is being written by] Jesus' apostle Peter, to God's people who are scattered throughout the countries of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. [Note: These places are located in present-day Turkey]. 2) These people have been [specially] selected, and [their acceptance was] pre-planned by God the Father, and they were set apart through [the work of] the Holy Spirit. This resulted in their obedience and sprinkling [Note: This is a figurative reference to the Old Testament practice of cleansing, See Exodus 24:7-8] by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God's unearned favor and peace be continually upon you.

3) God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is to be praised for being so merciful as to have given us a new birth, which provides for us a hope of never ending life through the means of Jesus Christ's return from the dead. 4) Through Him we have an inheritance that cannot be corrupted or contaminated, and will never disappear; it is reserved in heaven for you. 5) Through God's power you are protected by [your] faith, so that you can expect to be saved in the end. 6) Because of this you can be very joyous, even though it is necessary for you to have suffered many trials for a little while. 7) But these will only test your faith, which is more valuable than gold which, though refined by fire, eventually perishes. Your faith, [however], will [endure and eventually] prove to be praiseworthy and honorable when Jesus returns. 8) Although you have not seen Jesus, you [still] love Him and believe in Him, and this causes you to have an indescribable, glorious joy. 9) Your faith will [finally] bring about the salvation of your souls. 10) The prophets [of old], who spoke of this salvation, asked about and searched diligently concerning the unearned favor [God provided] for you people. 11) They studied [their own prophecies] to learn what [person or time], or circumstances, which the Holy Spirit in them pointed to, in predicting the sufferings of Christ and the glories yet to come. 12) It was revealed to these prophets that you people, not they, were the ones being ministered to in the matters now being announced to you by those who preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit, who was

sent from heaven. [This message contained] things which angels would like to look into.

13) So, gather your thoughts together for action, take control of yourselves and focus your hope completely on God's unearned favor, which will be brought to you by Jesus Christ when He returns. 14) As obedient children, do not pattern your lives after the evil desires you formerly had when you were ignorant, 15) but according to the Holy One, who called you [i.e., God], you people also should become holy [i.e., separated for God's service] in all your conduct, 16) because it is written [Lev. 11:44f], "You shall be holy [i.e., separated from sin] even as I am holy." 17) And if you call upon [God as] your Father, who judges each person's work impartially, [then] conduct yourselves during the time you spend in this life showing reverence [to God]. 18) You [should] know that you were bought back [from Satan], from your useless way of life, inherited from your forefathers, not with such perishable things as silver and gold, 19) but with [the] precious blood of Christ, who represents an unblemished lamb, without defect. 20) For Christ was previously known [by God, even] before the world was created, yet was not fully revealed for your benefit until [these] final times. 21) [It is] through Christ, whom God raised from the dead and honored, that you people have become believers in God, so that your faith and hope could rest in God.

22) [Since] you have purified your souls by [your] obedience to the truth [i.e., the Gospel message], which produces a genuine love for your brothers, [now] you should have this kind of fervent, heartfelt love for one another. 23) You have experienced new birth, not from seed that can decay, but from seed that cannot decay, through the living and enduring word of God. 24) For all forms of flesh are similar to grass, and all the splendor of [a person's] flesh is like the flower [which blossoms] from the grass. [But as with] grass, [a person's flesh] withers, and its flower [i.e., his splendor] falls off. 25) But the word of the Lord continues to live on and on [forever]. And this word is the good news that was preached to you people.

CHAPTER TWO

1) Therefore, you should put out of your lives all malice [i.e.,

bad attitudes], and all deceit and hypocrisy, and all envy and unwholesome talk. 2) [So], like newly born babies, you should desire the genuine, spiritual milk [i.e., God's word. See Heb. 5:12-13], so that by it you may grow toward [final] salvation, 3) since you have experienced the goodness of the Lord [i.e., that the Lord is good].

4) You should come to Him, who is a living stone, rejected by people, but chosen as precious in God's sight. 5) And you yourselves are also like living stones, being constructed into a spiritual house. For you are like holy priests who offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6) For it says in the Scripture [Isa. 28:16], "Look, I am placing a stone in [the city of] Zion [i.e., Jerusalem]. It is a specially selected, very valuable cornerstone. And the person who trusts in the Him [i.e., the One represented by this stone] will never have to suffer shame [i.e., because of unforgiven sin being brought up against him]." 7) To those of you who believe in Him then, this "Stone" is [very] precious. But to those who do not believe [Psa. 118:22 says], "The stone which those in charge of the building project have rejected has been made the principal stone for aligning the whole structure." 8) [And it also says, Isa. 8:14, that He would be], "A stone that people would stumble over and a rock over which they would trip and fall." The way they stumble is by disobeying the Gospel message. They were destined [though not forced] to do this.

9) But you people are especially chosen [by God]; you are a royal body of priests; you are a nation especially set apart for God's use; you are a people who belong exclusively to God, that you may express the virtues of the One who called you out of darkness [i.e., of sin and error], and into His marvelous light [i.e., righteousness and truth]. 10) At one time you [Gentiles] were not a [chosen] people, but now you are God's [special] people. Once you had not received [His] mercy, but now you have received it.

11) My dearly loved ones, I urge you, as a people who are foreigners and strangers [in this world], do not give in to sinful desires, which wage war against the soul. 12) You should live such good lives before [unconverted] Gentiles, so that even though they accuse you of being evildoers, by seeing your good deeds, they will [be led to] honor God [for you] on the day He visits us again [i.e., to bring judgment].

13) Submit yourselves to every authority set up by people for

the Lord's sake. [Submit to] a king as the [highest] authority, 14) or to governors who are appointed by him to punish wrongdoers, and to commend those who do right. 15) For it is God's will that, by doing good, you should put to silence the ignorant [talk and actions] of foolish people. 16) As servants of God, you should live as free people, but do not use this freedom to cover up your wrongdoing. 17) Show [proper] respect for everyone. Love your [Christian] brothers [and sisters]. Have an awe-inspiring respect for God. Show honor to the king.

18) Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters and show them respect, not just the ones who are good [to you] and treat you well, but also to those who are harsh toward you. 19) For those of you who put up with such suffering unjustly, because of your close relationship to God, are to be commended. 20) But it is no credit to you if you put up with a beating you deserve. But if you patiently tolerate suffering for doing good, this is pleasing to God. 21) [After all], this is what you were called to do, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you would follow in His steps. 22) [For] He neither sinned nor used deceitful words. 23) When He was spoken to with harsh insults, He did not reply in the same way. When He was made to suffer, He did not threaten [His tormentors], but instead entrusted Himself to God, [whom He knew] would make a righteous judgment [in the matter]. 24) Jesus took upon Himself our sins [when] His body was placed upon the cross so that we, [through] dying to [i.e., giving up] the sinful life, would live for righteousness. You were healed [from your sins] by His being brutally treated. 25) For you people were wandering away like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

CHAPTER THREE

1) In the same way [that Jesus was submissive], you wives should submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, even though they may not obey the [Gospel] message [they have heard] they may, without your talking [to them about it], 2) be won by observing your godly and respectful behavior. 3) Do not let your [adornment] be [the decorations] of the physical body, such as elaborate hair-dos, the wearing of golden [jewelry] and the wearing of [stunning] outfits. 4)

But [the kind of adornment you should display is] that of the inner person, with its enduring qualities of a meek and calm spirit, which are extremely valuable in God's eyes. 5) For this is the way holy women in ancient times decorated themselves. Their hope was in God and they were known for being in subjection to their own husbands. 6) Sarah obeyed her husband Abraham, even referring to him [in respectful terms such] as "sir." You [wives] are her [spiritual] descendants if you also do what is right and are not fearful [that things in life will turn out badly].

7) [You] husbands, in the same way, should live with your wives in an understanding way, recognizing their feminine nature as being physically weaker than yours, and showing special honor to them because of it. [Realize] that sharing your lives together is a gracious gift [from God]. [If you have the right relationship with them] it will help avoid problems in your prayer lives.

8) Now to summarize: All of you should think alike. Be sympathetically understanding [toward one another]. Be loving toward [your] brothers [and sisters]. Be tender-hearted and a humble-minded. 9) Do not repay a wrong action with [another] wrong action, nor abusive [language] with [additional] abuse, but rather be a blessing [to one another]. For the purpose of your being called [by God] was so that you could receive a blessing [from Him eventually]. 10) For [Psalm 39:12 says], "The person who loves [his] life and wants to have happy days, should avoid saying anything bad or deceptive. 11) He should turn away from wrong living and do what is good. He should desire peace and do whatever it takes to maintain it. 12) For the Lord's eyes see what the righteous person does and He hears their [earnest] prayers, but the Lord looks with disapproval on the person who does wrong."

13) And who do you think would [try to] hurt you if you become enthusiastic for doing what is right? 14) But even if you have to suffer for doing what was right, you still have [God's] blessing. So, do not be afraid of the threats [of your persecutors], and do not let it worry you. 15) But instead, set aside a place in your hearts where Christ is [in full control as] Lord, and be prepared always to give a suitable reply to every person who asks you for a reason why you have an inner hope. But [be sure you do it] in a meek and respectful way, however. 16) May your conscience be able to so approve of your conduct that, even if you are ridiculed, those doing it will

[eventually] have to be ashamed [of themselves] for criticizing your Christian behavior. 17) For, if it is God's will that you should suffer, it is better [for you] that it be on account of doing right than doing wrong. 18) For Christ suffered once for people's sins [to be forgiven]. [It was the case of] a righteous Man suffering for unrighteous people, so that He could bring you [or, "us"] to God [for salvation]. [Though] He [i.e., Jesus] was put to death physically, He was brought back to life by the Holy Spirit [Note: Some translations say "in spirit"]. 19) It was by the Holy Spirit that He went to preach [See Eph. 2:17] to the [now departed] spirits [of pre-Flood people who are now] in prison [i.e., Hades]. 20) These people had disobeyed [Noah's preaching, See II Pet. 2:5] back when God's patience waited [for them to repent, See Gen. 6:3], during the days of Noah, when the ship was being constructed. It was by that means [i.e., the ship floating them to safety through the Flood waters] that a few persons, eight of them, were saved [from destruction] through water. 21) This water prefigured immersion [into Christ], which now also saves you, not by removing dirt from the [physical] body, but [by serving] as an appeal [or, "pledge"] to God for a clear conscience through the raising of Jesus Christ from the dead. 22) He has [now] gone to heaven, and is [seated] at the right side of God, where the angels and [other] authorities and powers have been subjected to Him.

CHAPTER FOUR

1) Therefore, since Christ has suffered physically, you people should fortify yourselves with the same attitude He had. For the person who has suffered physically [i.e., in standing for Christ] has quit sinning. 2) So then, you should no longer live the rest of your lives [to satisfy] the sinful desires of your body, but to do what God wants. 3) For the time you have [already] spent in the past [i.e., as Gentile unbelievers] was long enough to have practiced unrestrained, indecent conduct, improper sexual cravings, riotous living, wild parties, drunken orgies and disgusting idol worship. 4) Now, those people you used to run around with cannot understand why you have stopped living such a wasteful lives, so they just "badmouth" you. 5) But, they will have to answer to God, who will judge both those who are now alive and those who have already died, [for the way they have lived]. 6) This is the purpose that the Gospel was preached to

those who have died physically [for the faith]: It was so that, even though they had been judged physically [i.e., by suffering death at the hands of men], they could still live spiritually in the presence of God.

7) But the end of everything [as far as your lives are concerned] is near, so be sensible, and sober [so as to be] prayerful. 8) Above everything else, have a warm love for one another, for such a love keeps many sins from occurring [between you]. 9) Extend hospitality to one another without complaining [that you have to]. 10) As each of you has received a gift [from God], you should make use of it [in the body], so that you will be [good] caretakers of the many unearned ways that God favors you. 11) If someone's gift is speaking, he should [be sure to] say only what God wants him to. If a person's gift is serving, he should do so by the strength provided by God [who supplies all such gifts]. This is so that, in using all gifts, God may be honored through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs honor and power forever and ever. May it be so.

12) Loved ones, do not be surprised that you people are undergoing extremely difficult trials, as though something strange were happening to you, for it is [only] a test [of your faith]. 13) You should rejoice that you are sharing some of what Christ has suffered, so that you will get to rejoice all the more when He returns in His splendor. 14) If you are spoken against for being Christians, you have God's blessing, because His glorious Holy Spirit rests upon you [to provide comfort, See John 14:16]. 15) [However], you should not have to suffer for murdering, stealing, doing evil or interfering in the affairs of others. 16) But if a person should have to suffer because he is a Christian, he should not be ashamed [of it], but instead, he should bring honor to God by [wearing] the name [of Christ]. 17) For the time has [now] come for the house of God [the church, See I Tim. 3:15] to begin receiving judgment [i.e., by undergoing persecution], and if it starts with us [Christians], what will be the [ultimate] end of people who do not obey the Gospel of God? 18) And if people who are trying to do right [i.e., Christians] are saved through [suffering] such difficulties, where will the ungodly and sinful person end up, [if not in hell]? 19) Therefore, those who [are allowed to] suffer in harmony with God's [permissive] will, should commit their souls to a trustworthy Creator, [who will take everything into account], while they go on [trying] to do what is right.

CHAPTER FIVE

1) So, the elders in the various places where you live, are to receive the following exhortation. (I too, am an elder and have witnessed the sufferings of Christ, and am also assured of partaking of the glorious [salvation, 1:5] that will someday be revealed). 2) You should serve as shepherds of God's flock [i.e., the church], among whom you minister, providing careful oversight [of the people], not because you feel forced to, but because you want to, as this is in accordance with the way God wants it to be. Do not [serve as elders] simply out of a desire for the income you receive, but because your heart is in it. 3) Do not act as dictators over the people you are assigned to care for, but [rather] serve as examples of how they ought to live. 4) And when the Supreme Shepherd [i.e., Jesus] comes back, you will receive [for your effort] a glorious crown [of reward] that will never fade away [Note: The idea of "fading away" is suggested by the laurel wreath bestowed on the winner of an athletic contest].

5) And in the same way, you younger [Christians] should be [respectfully] submissive to the older ones. And all of you should [be willing to] humbly serve one another, for God stands opposed to [the efforts of] proud people, but extends His unearned favor to those [who serve] with humility. 6) Therefore, be humble [in your actions] before God's powerful authority, so that you may be exalted [by Him] up at the proper time. 7) Place all your anxious cares upon God [in prayer], because He genuinely cares about you. 8) Be sensible and alert; your enemy the devil is prowling around like a roaring [i.e., hungry] lion looking for someone to [kill and] eat. 9) You should withstand his efforts by maintaining a strong faith [in God], remembering that your [Christian] brothers in the [rest of] the world are experiencing [and enduring] suffering similar to yours.

10) And the God who bestows every unearned favor [upon His people], who invited you to partake of His eternal splendor through Christ Jesus, will restore, confirm, strengthen and stabilize you people [in the faith], after you have gone through a brief time of suffering. 11) May God have total authority over everything [including your circumstances] forever. May it be so.

12) This brief message is being inscribed [or delivered] by Silvanus, whom I consider to be a faithful brother. [In it] I am exhorting you and giving testimony that it is a message about God's

genuine unearned favor upon you. So, continue to follow [and obey] what it says. **13)** Your sister [church] here in Babylon, [also] chosen [by God], as you have been, sends her greetings along with my [spiritual] son Mark. **14)** Greet one another lovingly, [expressing it] with a kiss [of brotherly affection].

May there be peace [of heart] to all those [there] who are in [the fellowship of] Christ.

II PETER

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is being written by] Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith just as precious as ours, through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. 2) [May God's] unearned favor and peace be yours in abundance, through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.

3) God's divine power has given us everything [necessary] for [abundant] life and godly living, through the knowledge of Him [i.e., God], who called us by His own splendor and goodness. 4) By these [blessings] He has given to us the precious and tremendous promises, so that you people may share in His divine nature, [after] having escaping the world's corruption, caused by evil desires.

5) And for this very reason, you people should make every effort to develop goodness along with your faith, 6) and knowledge along with your goodness, and self-control along with your knowledge, and endurance along with your self-control, and godliness along with your endurance, 7) and brotherly kindness along with your godliness, and with your brotherly kindness, develop love. 8) For if you people have a lot of these [qualities] they will keep you from being unproductive and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9) But, anyone who lacks these qualities is [spiritually] blind and shortsighted, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed [i.e., forgiven] of his past sins. 10) So, brothers, be diligent to make sure of your calling and election [i.e., of your status as being selected by God], for when you do, you will never stumble [and fall away from God]. 11) For in this way, you will be provided with a rich welcome into the never ending kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ [i.e., in heaven].

12) Therefore, I intend to constantly remind you people about these things [i.e., those mentioned in verses 5-11], even though you [already] know them, and have been established in the truth you now possess. 13) But I consider it the right thing to do, as long as I am in this "tent" [Note: This is an allusion to his still being alive], to stir up your memory [of these things], 14) knowing that [I will] soon put off my

"tent" [i.e., I will soon die], even as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. **15)** And I will make every effort to see that, after I leave [i.e., die], you will always be able to recall the things [I said to you]. **16)** For we did not use cleverly conceived stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, because we were eyewitnesses of His Majesty [i.e., the apostles had personally seen the miraculous power of Jesus]. **17)** For Jesus had received honor and glory from God, the Father, when [God's] voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory saying, "This is my dearly loved Son, and I am ERvery pleased with Him." **18)** And we heard this voice coming from heaven when we were with Him in the holy mountain.

19) And we have the message of the prophets [confirmed to us] as more certain [than ever]. So, you will do well to pay careful attention to it, as [you would] to a lamp in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts [Note: This probably refers to the beginning of the Gospel age, when people would become enlightened to its message]. **20)** Above all, [you should realize] that no prophecy of Scripture originates from a person's own initiative [Note: This passage is discussing the *source* of Scripture, not the *understanding* of it]. **21)** For prophecy was never produced by the will of man, but people spoke from God, as they were carried along [i.e., inspired] by the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER TWO

1) But just as there were false prophets among the people before, there will also be false teachers among you [Christians]. They will privately teach harmful doctrines that destroy people [spiritually], by even denying [that Jesus is] the Master, [and thereby] destroy themselves quickly. **2)** And many people will follow their unrestrained, indecent conduct, which will result in the true way [of God] being spoken against. **3)** And through greedy desires and deceptive words they will exploit you [for evil purposes]. But the judgment that they have had coming for a long time, will not delay, but will eventually awaken [i.e., arrive] to bring destruction upon them.

4) For if God did not spare sinning angels, but cast them, in chains, into deep, dark dungeons to await judgment; **5)** and if He did not spare the ancient world of Noah's day, when He brought a flood on those ungodly people (though Noah, a preacher of righteousness,

and seven other people, were saved from it); 6) and if God also condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by reducing them to ashes, thereby condemning them to catastrophic destruction, and making them an example to other ungodly people in the future; 7) and if He rescued the righteous man Lot, who had become very disturbed by unrestrained wickedness [of the people there in Sodom] 8) (For, being a righteous man living among them, Lot's righteous spirit was very disturbed every day by the wickedness he heard and saw), 9) then the Lord [surely] knows how to rescue godly people from trying situations, and to keep unrighteous people under [a sentence of] punishment [to be received] on the judgment day. 10) [This fate will come upon] those people especially who corrupt themselves with physical desires and despise being ruled by others. They are daring, self-willed, and are not afraid to speak against glorious beings [i.e., angels], 11) while [those] angels, who are greater in strength and power than they, refuse to speak against such authorities, in condemnation, before the Lord. 12) However, these people are like unreasonable, ignorant creatures of instinct, born as animals which are [to be] caught and destroyed. They speak out against things about which they are ignorant. In [the process of] destroying others, they will certainly be destroyed themselves. 13) They suffer wrong themselves for doing wrong to other people. They consider it [especially] pleasurable to carry on their drunken revellings, [even] during the daytime. They become blots and blemishes [i.e., like spoiled food] in your fellowship meal, as they revel in their deceitful behavior. 14) Their eyes are filled with sexual lust, and they are never satisfied when it comes to sinning. They entice unstable people and have hearts trained to be greedy [i.e., they continually desire the possessions of others]. [In this condition] they are under God's curse. 15) They strayed away [from God] by taking the wrong road like Balaam, the son of Bosor did, who loved the reward for doing wrong. 16) But Balaam was rebuked for his own wrongdoing by a speechless donkey, who spoke out in a man's voice and prevented the prophet from continuing his foolishness. 17) Such people are like springs that give no water and clouds driven by the winds. [Only] the blackest darkness awaits them. 18) [Although] their talk is big, what they say is worthless, and by [offering people] fleshly desires [i.e., sexual gratification], they lead people astray, who are barely escaping from the error of the world. 19) [Although] these people promise "liberty,"

they themselves are slaves to corrupting influences, for people are slaves to whatever controls them. 20) For if people who have escaped from the defiling practices of the world by coming to know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, become tangled up in them again, and are overcome by them, these people are worse off than before they were converted. 21) It would have been better for them if they had not known the right way [to God] than, after knowing it, to turn back from the sacred message that been presented to them. 22) It has happened to them like the true proverb [says], "The dog [throws up, and then] goes back and eats its own vomit", and "The hog that was all cleaned up [goes back] to wallowing in the mud."

CHAPTER THREE

1) This is now, my dearly loved ones, the second letter I am writing to you; in both of them, as a reminder, I want to stir up your sincere thoughts 2) to remember the words spoken to you in the past by the holy prophets, and what the Lord and Savior commanded you through your apostles.

3) First of all, you should understand that, in the final days, mockers with evil desires will come [to you] saying, mockingly, 4) "Why has the promise of a coming Messiah [not been fulfilled yet]? After all, since the time our ancestors died, everything has continued the same, even since the beginning of creation!" 5) But, these people intentionally forget that the heavens, which existed long ago, and the earth, which was formed out of water and by water, [were created] by the word of God. 6) [And] it was by water that the world, which existed at that time, perished in a great flood [of Noah's day]! 7) But, by means of the same word [of God], the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, awaiting the judgment and destruction [by God], along with [its] ungodly people.

8) But do not forget this one thing, my dearly loved ones, that as the Lord [counts time], one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. 9) The Lord is not slow about keeping His promise, like some people are; but is [simply] being patient with you, since He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but He wants everyone to repent [i.e., change their hearts and lives].

10) But the day of the Lord will come as a thief [i.e., unexpectedly]. At that time the heavens will pass away with a loud

noise and the elements [Note: This refers either to the heavenly bodies or to the material components of the universe], will be dissolved with intense heat. And the earth and its works [i.e., its activities] will be burned up. [Note: Some translations render this phrase as it is in some ancient manuscripts, "will be disclosed," or "will be laid bare"]. **11)** Since all these things are [certain] to be destroyed, what kind of persons should you be, [if not like those] living holy lives, and in a godly manner, **12)** [while] looking forward to, and earnestly desiring the day of God to come, when the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved by fire and the elements [See verse 10] will melt with intense heat. **13)** But, since God has promised it, we look forward to new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will prevail.

14) So, my dearly loved ones, while you are waiting for these things [to happen], do your best to be found at peace with God, pure and blameless in His sight. **15)** And consider [that] the patience of the Lord means [further opportunities for] salvation, [just] as our dearly loved brother Paul also wrote to you, using to the wisdom given to him by God. **16)** He spoke about these things in all of his letters, which contain some parts that are difficult to understand. [Because of this], ignorant and unstable people twist [his writings], just as they also do to the other Scriptures, to own destruction.

17) Therefore, dearly loved ones, since you know about these things ahead of time, be on your guard so that you are not led astray by the error of lawless people, and [thus] fall from your own stability [i.e., your safe or secure position in Christ]. **18)** But grow in the unearned favor and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May He be honored both now and forever. May it be so.

I JOHN

CHAPTER ONE

1) We [apostles] proclaim to you [the truth about Jesus], who existed from the beginning [of time]. We have heard [Him] and seen [Him] with our [own] eyes. We looked at Him, and [even] touched Him with our hands. [See John 20:20]. [So, we proclaim that] He is the word of life [i.e., the life-giving Word]! 2) Truly, this "Life" was made known to us and we have [actually] seen it [i.e., Him], and so we testify and proclaim to you [that He is] "the Eternal Life," who was with the Father and was made known to us [apostles]. 3) We declare to you what we have seen and heard [concerning Christ], so that you also may share a relationship with us. And indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4) We are writing to you about these things, so that [together] our joy may be [completely] full.

5) And this is the message we heard from Him, and [now want to] announce to you: God is light [i.e. righteousness] and in His [very nature] there is no trace of darkness [i.e., evil]. 6) If we claim to share a relationship with God and yet live in darkness [i.e., in a sinful way], we are lying and are not living a truthful life. 7) But, if we live in the light [of righteousness] just like God [constantly] lives in the light [of righteousness], we can truly share a relationship with one another and [can know that] the blood of Jesus, God's Son continues to cleanse [our spirits] from all of our sins.

8) If we claim to have no sinful practices [in our lives], we are self-deceived and are not being truthful about the matter. 9) [But] if we confess our sins [to God], He is faithful [to His promise] and righteous [in His judgment], and will forgive us of those sins and cleanse us from all of our wrongdoing. 10) If we claim that we have not committed sins, we are [in effect] calling God a liar [i.e., because He says we have] and His word [i.e., the real truth about the matter] is not in our hearts.

CHAPTER TWO

1) My little children [i.e., dear ones], I am writing this to you

so that you will not sin anymore. But if anyone does sin, we have Someone to go to the Father on our behalf; it is Jesus Christ, the [only] righteous One. 2) And He is the One who provides a "covering over" [or atonement] for our sins [See Heb. 2:17; Dan. 9:24; II Chron. 29:24], and not for ours [who are already Christians] only, but also for the sins of the people of the whole world.

3) And here is how we can be assured that we know Jesus [i.e., that we are saved]: [It is] by obeying what He commands us. 4) The person who says, "I have come to know Him," but does not obey what He commands, is lying [by such a profession], and the truth [about the matter] is not in his heart. 5) But the person who obeys what His teaching requires, truly in this person love for God has been made complete. This is [another way] to be sure that we are in [fellowship with] Him: 6) The person who claims he is continuing to live in [fellowship with] Jesus should also live the way He did.

7) My dearly loved ones, I am not writing to you about a new commandment, but about an old one. [It is the one] you had learned about from the beginning. [Note: This is the commandment to love one another (3:1: II John 5) which Jesus had taught his disciples during His earthly ministry. See Mark 12:31]. This old commandment is the word [of God] which you heard [previously]. 8) Yet, I am [also] writing to you about a new commandment [Note: This commandment was to love one another *as* Jesus loved them. See John 13:34]; its truth is [being demonstrated] by Christ [perfectly] and [also] by you people [in a lesser measure], because the darkness [of sin] is passing away, and the real light [of righteousness] is already shining [in people's lives]. 9) The person who claims to be living in [harmony with] the light [i.e., by obeying God's truth], and [yet] hates his brother is still [living] in the darkness [of sin]. 10) [However], the person who loves his brother continues to live in [harmony with] the light [of God's truth], and such a person is not the cause of others stumbling [over his example]. 11) But the person who hates his brother is in the darkness [of sin] and he lives in [harmony with] that darkness, and he does not know where he is heading, because the darkness [of sin] has blinded his eyes [to his spiritual condition].

12) I am writing to you, little children [i.e., dear ones], because you have been forgiven of your sins for [the sake of] Christ's name. 13) I am writing to you fathers, because you have known Him [i.e., Christ], [who has existed] from the beginning [See John 1:1]. I

am writing to you young men, because you have overcome the [power of the] evil one [i.e., through faith they had gained victory over Satan, See 5:4]. 14) I have written to you little children [i.e., dear ones], because you have known the Father [as your God]. I have written to you fathers, because you have known Him [i.e., Christ], [who has existed] from the beginning. [See verse 13]. I have written to you young men, because you are [spiritually] strong and the word of God continues to live in your hearts, and you have overcome the [power of the] evil one [See verse 13].

15) You should not love the [godless] world, nor the things [i.e., the materialistic values] that are part of this [present] age. If any person loves the world, a [genuine] love for the Father is not in his heart. 16) For all that makes up the world, namely, the improper desires of the physical body, the improper desires for what is seen, and the [boastful] pride over life's possessions; these are not from the Father, but from the [godless] world. 17) And the world, with its [physical and material] desires, is passing away, but the person who does what God wants will continue to live forever.

18) Dear children, it is [now] the last hour [i.e., the final period of God's dealing with people on earth], and since you have heard that an antichrist [i.e., a person who is against Christ] is coming, even now [you should be aware that] many antichrists have [already] come. This is [one way] we know that this is the last hour. 19) These antichrists left our group [i.e., withdrew their fellowship from us], but they were not [really a part] of us, for if they had been, they would have continued [to participate] with us. But, by their leaving us, it proved that none of them were [really] a part of our group [after all].

20) But, you people have a "special gift" from the Holy One [Note: The Greek word for "special gift" is "charisma" and probably refers to the Holy Spirit (See Acts 2:38); "Holy One" probably refers to Jesus, (See Acts 2:27; 3:14)], and all of you know [the truth]. 21) I did not write to you people because you are ignorant of the truth [about these matters], but because you do know it, and because nothing false belongs to the true teaching. 22) Who is the liar? It is the person who denies that Jesus [truly] is the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen One]. This person is the antichrist [See verse 18]; he is the one who denies [the truth about] the Father and the Son. 23) Every person who denies [the truth about] the Son [See 4:2-3], does not have the Father [living in his heart]; but, the

person who confesses [the truth about] the Son has the Father [living in his heart] also.

24) You people should continue [to practice] what you heard from the beginning [i.e., to love one another, See verses 7-11]. If it does, then you also will continue in [fellowship with] the Son, and with the Father. 25) And this is the promise which Christ [or, "God"] has given to us: [It is] never ending life. [Note: This passage may mean that God promised us "the Eternal Life," that is, Christ, See John 3:16].

26) I have written these things to you people concerning those who are trying to lead you astray [from the truth]. 27) And this is important to you: The "special gift," which you received from God [See verse 20], continues to live in your hearts, [so that] you do not need anyone to teach you [anything different]. But, since this same "special gift" teaches you concerning everything that is true, and [what it teaches] is not false, you should continue to live in [fellowship with] Christ.

28) And now, little children [i.e., dear ones], continue to live in [fellowship with] Christ, so that when He appears, we may have boldness and not have [any reason] to be ashamed in front of Him at His [second] coming.

29) If you know that Christ is [truly] righteous [verse 1], then you should also know that everyone who does what is right has been [spiritually] conceived [and eventually born] by God [See 5:18].

CHAPTER THREE

1) Look at how much love the Father has shown to us [Christians], that we should be called His children! But, that is what we [really] are! The reason the people of the world do not know who we are is because they do not know who God [really] is. 2) Dearly loved ones, we are God's children now, but it has not yet been revealed [to us] what we will be [in the future life, Luke 20:34-36]. But, we do know this, however, that when Jesus is revealed [i.e., at His second coming], we will be like Him [I Cor. 15:49], for we will see what He really looks like! 3) And every person who has set his hope on this [i.e., of being like Jesus], will live [as] purely [as possible], just as He [i.e., Jesus Himself] is pure.

4) Every person who practices a life of sin is also breaking [God's] law, for sin is law-breaking. 5) But, you [should] know that

Christ appeared [on earth] to take away [our] sins, and that there is no sin in His life [See II Cor. 5:21]. 6) No person who lives in [fellowship with] Christ will continue living a sinful life; the one who keeps on sinning [however], has not seen Him or known Him [as his personal Savior].

7) Little children [i.e., dear ones], do not allow anyone to lead you astray [from the truth]; the person who continues to do what is right is [considered by God as] righteous, even as Christ is righteous. 8) [But] the person who continues to live a sinful life belongs to the devil, because the devil has continued to sin since the beginning [See Gen. 3]. For this is the reason that the Son of God came [into the world]; it was to destroy the works [i.e., the influence of] the devil [in people's lives]. 9) No one who has been [spiritually] conceived [and eventually born] by God continues to live a sinful life, because God's seed [i.e., His word, See Luke 8:11] continues to live in his heart, so he cannot [continue a life of] sin, because he has been conceived by God. 10) Here is how the children of God and the children of the devil can be recognized: All those who do not continue to do what is right do not belong to God. Also, the person who does not continue to love his brother [or sister does not belong to God].

11) [Now] this is the message that you people heard from the beginning [of Christ's ministry], that we should love one another [See Mark 12:31], 12) not [to hate each other] the way Cain did, who belonged to the evil one [i.e., Satan], when he murdered his brother [Abel]. And why did he murder him? It was because his [own] actions were evil and his brother's were righteous [See Heb. 11:4]

13) So, do not be surprised, brothers, if the people of the world hate you. 14) [For] we [can] know that we have passed out of [the realm of spiritual] death and into [spiritual] life, because we [show] love for the brothers [and sisters]. The person who does not love [them] continues to be [spiritually] dead. 15) Every person who hates his brother is a murderer [in God's sight]; and you [surely] know that no murderer has [the hope of] never ending life remaining in his heart. 16) Here is how we can know what genuine love really is: It was [demonstrated by] Jesus laying down His life [on the cross] for us. And [because of that] we [too] should [be willing to] lay down our lives for [the sake of helping] our brothers [and sisters]. 17) Now whoever has [a sufficient amount of] life's possessions and [then] observes one of his [Christian] brothers who does not have enough to

get by on, but does not feel sorry for him [i.e., enough to help him out], surely a love for God does not continue to live in that person's heart. 18) Little children [i.e., dear ones], we should not [merely] claim to love [people], or [even just] talk about it, but [we should love] by what we do [for them] in a genuine way. 19) And this is how we will know that we are following [God's] truth, and will have assurance [of it] in our hearts and before God [as well]. 20) But, if our hearts condemn us [for not demonstrating God's love for others], surely God, who is greater than our hearts [will also condemn us], because He knows all things.

21) Loved ones, if our hearts do not condemn us [i.e., because we are showing love by helping the needy], we can have boldness before God [in prayer for our own needs]; 22) and we can be assured of receiving from God whatever we ask Him for, because we are obeying His commands [i.e., especially the one about loving others] and are practicing what is pleasing to Him. 23) And this is His commandment: We should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ [i.e., the person of Christ], and love one another, just He has commanded us to do. 24) And God lives in the heart of the person who [continually] obeys His commands, and he lives in [fellowship with] God. And here is [another] way we know that God lives in our hearts: It is by [means of] the Holy Spirit, whom God gave to us. [See Rom. 8:9, 11; James 4:5; I Cor. 6:19].

CHAPTER FOUR

1) Loved ones, do not believe [the message of] every spirit [i.e., every person claiming to be a teacher], but test the spirits [i.e., require proof that they and their message are genuine] to see whether they represent God [or not], because many false prophets have begun circulating throughout the world. 2) Here is how to know [who is speaking from] the Holy Spirit of God: Every spirit [i.e., person] who proclaims that Jesus Christ has come [to earth] in a physical body is [speaking] from God. [See I Cor. 12:3]. 3) But every spirit who does not proclaim [this truth about] Jesus is not [speaking] from God. And this [person] represents the spirit of the antichrist [See 2:18-22; II John 7] whom you have heard would come. Well, now he is already here!

4) [But], you people are [followers] of God, little children

[i.e., dear ones], and you have overcome them [i.e., these false teachers] because He who is in your lives [i.e., the Holy Spirit, See 3:24] is greater [i.e., more powerful] than he who is in [i.e., dominates] the world [i.e., Satan. See II Cor. 4:4]. 5) These [false teachers] are part of the world, so [naturally] they speak [a message endorsed] by the world and the world listens to them. 6) We [who preach the true Gospel] represent God; the person who knows God listens to our message; the one who does not belong to God does not listen to us. This is how we can know [the difference between those speaking by] the Holy Spirit of truth and [those speaking by] the spirit of [Satan's] error.

7) Loved ones, we should love for one another, because love comes from [the very nature of] God, and every person who [continually] loves [others] has been [spiritually] conceived by God [See 2:29; 3:9], and knows [he is in fellowship with] God. 8) The person who does not love [others] did not know God [as Savior], for [the very nature of] God is love. 9) Here is the way God's love for us was demonstrated; He sent His one and only Son into the world so that we could have [spiritual] life through Him. 10) Here is [the essence of] love: [It is] not that we loved God [first], but that He loved us [See Rom. 5:6-8] and sent His Son to be a "covering over" [i.e., atonement, 2:2] for our sins. 11) Loved ones, if God loved us that much, we should also love one another? 12) No person has gazed upon God [at any time]; [but] if we love one another, God [continually] lives in our hearts, and His love is made complete within us.

13) This is [one way] to know we live in [fellowship with] God and that He lives in our hearts: [It is] because He has given us His Holy Spirit [to live within us, See 3:24]. 14) And we [apostles] have seen and are [reliable] witnesses that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world [See 1:2; 2:2]. 15) Whoever proclaims that Jesus is the Son of God, God [continually] lives in that person's heart, and he lives in [fellowship with] God [See 2:23]. 16) And we have known [with certainty] and have believed [with assurance] that God has truly loved us. God's [very nature] is love and the person who [continually] loves [Him and others] lives in [fellowship with] God [continually], and God [continually] lives in that person's heart. 17) Here is what a complete love will do for us: It will give us boldness in [facing] the judgment day, because the way Jesus acts

[regarding love] is the way we should act [while] in this world. 18) There is no [reason for] fear if one [really] loves, but a complete love removes fear [from us] because fear produces punishment [i.e., mental anxiety], and the person who is [always] afraid does not have a complete love. 19) We love [God and others] because God has first loved us. 20) If a person says, "I love God," yet [in reality] hates his brother, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot [possibly] love God, whom he has never seen. 21) And this is the [greatest] commandment [See Matt. 2:37-38] we have received from Him: [It requires] that the person who [claims to] love God should also love his brother.

CHAPTER FIVE

1) Every person who believes that Jesus is the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one] has been [spiritually] conceived [and eventually born] by God. And everyone who [continually] loves God, who did the conceiving, also [must continually] love the person whom God has [spiritually] conceived. 2) This is [one] way we know that we love God's [spiritually reborn] children: [It is] when we love God and obey what He commands us to do. 3) For this is [real evidence of] our love for God: [It is] obeying what He commands us to do. And obeying His commands does not cause us any grief [or, unpleasantness]. 4) For whoever [Note: The Greek says "whatever"] is [spiritually] conceived [and eventually born] by God will overcome [the evil influence of] the world. And this is [how] that victory can be gained over the world: [It is through] our faith [in God]. 5) And who is the person who can overcome [the evil influence of] the world? [It is] the one who [truly] believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

6) This Jesus is the one whose coming [to earth was introduced] by water [at His immersion. See Matt. 3:13] and [completed] by blood [at His crucifixion, John 19:17-37]. He did not come by the water only, but by the water and by the blood. And it is the Holy Spirit who gives testimony [at both of these events], because the Holy Spirit is [always] the truth. [See John 16:13]. 7) For there are three who give their testimony [about Jesus]: 8) The Holy Spirit [through His Word], and the water [through His immersion] and the blood [through His crucifixion]; and these three agree together [in giving testimony about Him]. 9) If we [are willing to]

accept the testimony of people about matters, [surely we ought to accept that] the testimony of God is more reliable; because the testimony of God is that He has presented [confirming] testimony concerning [the identity and mission of] His Son. 10) The person who [sincerely] believes in God's Son has the evidence [of it] within his heart, [confirming God's testimony]. The person who does not believe God [i.e., what He says about Jesus], accuses Him of lying, because he has not accepted the [irrefutable] testimony of God concerning [the identity and mission of] His Son. 11) And this is the testimony [of God]: He gave to us [the hope of] never ending life, and this life is [available through fellowship] in His Son. 12) The person who has the Son [in his heart] possesses this "life;" the one who does not have the Son of God does not possess this "life."

13) I have written these things to you people, who believe in the name [i.e., in the person and work] of the Son of God, so that you can have assurance that you have [the hope of] never ending life. [See Titus 1:2; 3:7; Mark 10:30]. 14) And this is [how we can express] boldness in our relationship with God: Whatever we ask [of God, in prayer], so long as it is in harmony with His will for us, [we know] He hears our request. 15) And if we can be sure that He hears our request for whatever we ask [of Him], we can [also] be certain that we [will] have whatever we have requested from Him. 16) If anyone [of you] observes his brother [or sister] sinning [in a way that would not lead] to [spiritual] death, he should ask [God, in prayer, to help that person], and God will give him [spiritual] life, [that is], to such ones, provided their sin is not leading to [spiritual] death. There is such a sin that leads to [spiritual] death. [See Heb. 6:4-6; I Tim. 5:6; Heb. 10:26-27; II Pet. 2:20-22]. I am not suggesting that you should ask [God, in prayer] about such a situation. 17) All wrongdoing is sinful, and [yet] there is a situation where [a person's] sin does not lead [him] to [spiritual] death.

18) We know that every person who has been [spiritually] conceived [by God and eventually born] does not continue in [a life of] sin; but God's one and only conceived [Son] keeps him [from continuing to sin], and the evil one [i.e., Satan] does not continue to touch him. [i.e., continue to control his life]. 19) We [also] know that we are [children] of God and that the people of the whole world lie under [the control of] the evil one [i.e., Satan]. 20) And [in addition], we know that the Son of God has come [in a physical body, See 4:2]

and has given us understanding, so that we can know the True One [i.e., God], and that we are in [fellowship with] the True One, even His Son Jesus Christ. This Son is the true God and eternal life.

21) Little children [i.e., dear ones], protect yourselves from [worshiping] idols.

II JOHN

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This is being written by] the elder to the lady chosen [by God], and to her children [Note: The terms "lady" and "children" here refer to a congregation and the Christians who belong to it. See I Peter 5:13; II John 13], whom I love in the truth. [Note: Perhaps this phrase means "whom I truly love"]. And I am not the only one [to love you], but all those [other congregations] who know the truth [of God], also love you. 2) [We all love you] because of the truth which continues to live in our hearts and will be with us forever. 3) Unearned favor, mercy and peace will be with us from God, the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, in truth and love. [i.e., truth and love will accompany the other blessings].

4) I was very happy when I learned that some of your children [i.e., members of the congregation] are living in [harmony with the] truth, just as we have been commanded to do by the Father. 5) And now I ask you, lady [See verse 1], not as though writing a new commandment to you, but [I wanted to remind you of] one that we had [heard] from the beginning [of Christ's ministry]: [It is] that we should love one another. 6) And this is [the true meaning of] love: That we should live in obedience to God's commandments. And this is the commandment, just as you heard from the beginning, that you should live in it [i.e., live a life of love].

7) For many deceivers have begun circulating in the world; they are those who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come [to earth] in a physical body. Such a person is the deceiver and the antichrist [See 2:18]. 8) Pay close attention to yourselves, so that you do not lose what we [Note: Some Greek manuscripts say "you"] worked for [i.e., the spiritual blessings you have acquired], but [continue faithful] so that you will receive a full reward. [See Luke 12:47-48; James 3:1; Matt. 20:1-15]. 9) Every person who does not continue to follow the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God [in his life]. [But], the person who continues to follow in the teaching [of Christ] has both the Father and the Son [in his life]. 10) If anyone comes to you [i.e., to your meetings] who does not bring this teaching [about Christ], you should not welcome him into your home or give him [any] greetings. [i.e., suggesting approval or endorsement]. 11) For

the person who greets him [with approval] participates in his evil deeds. [i.e., in his false teaching].

12) I have many [more] things to write to you about, but will not do so with paper and ink, since I hope to visit you [soon] and speak to you in person, so that our joy may be complete.

13) The children [i.e., members] of your chosen sister [church], send you their greetings. [See verse 1].

III JOHN

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This is being written by] the elder to my dear [friend] Gaius, whom I love in the truth. [Note: This may mean "whom I truly love"].

2) [My] dearly loved [friend], I am praying that you will do well in everything [materially?] and that you will have [good] health, just as your soul [i.e., your spiritual life] is doing well. 3) For I was very happy when some of the brothers came and told me that you are being [faithful] to the truth [i.e., the word of God], and that you are living according to it, [as well]. 4) I do not have any greater joy than to hear that my [spiritual] children are living according to the truth.

5) Dear [friend], you are accomplishing a faithful work whenever you do something for the brothers [traveling in the Lord's work], especially when they are strangers [to you]. 6) These people testify about your love [for them] before the [assembled] church. You will be doing a good thing to send them on their journey in a way that is pleasing to God [i.e., by furnishing them with travel expenses for their ministry]. 7) For they went out, [ministering] for the sake of [Jesus'] name, without taking [any money] from Gentiles [i.e., non-Christians]. 8) Therefore, we should show hospitality to such men, so that we can be fellow-workers [with them] in [the cause of] the truth.

9) I wrote a letter to the church [there], but Diotrephes, who loves to be first [in importance] among the members [of the body there], does not receive us [i.e., he did not listen to or acknowledge the authority of us apostles]. 10) So, if I come [to visit you], I will remind you of what he is doing, [such as] using wicked words to talk nonsense against us [apostles]. And, not being satisfied with that, he [also] refuses to welcome the [other] brothers, and prevents [other] people from doing so [i.e., from welcoming these brothers], and even kicks them out of the church [for trying to].

11) Dear [friend], do not imitate what is evil, but [only] what is good. The person who does what is good is [a child] of God; the one who does evil has not seen God [spiritually]. 12) Demetrius has been given [a favorable] commendation by everyone, and [is commended] by the truth itself. We [apostles] also give him [a

favorable] commendation, and you know that our testimony [about these things] is true.

13) I had many things [I wanted] to write you about, but I do not want to do it with pen and ink, 14) because I hope to see you soon, and [then] we can speak face to face.

15) May there be peace in your lives. Our friends [here] send you their greetings. [I ask that you also] greet each of our friends [there] by name.

JUDE

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This is being written by] Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James [Note: This "Jude" was probably not the apostle. See verses 17-18], to those who have been called [by God], who are also loved in [fellowship with] God the Father, and who are kept [safe] in [fellowship with] Jesus Christ. 2) May there be mercy toward you people, and may your peace and love increase.

3) Dearly loved ones, as I was very eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we share in common, I felt it necessary [instead] to write urging you to contend earnestly for the faith [i.e., the teaching of Christ] which was once and for all delivered [by the apostles, See verse 17] to the saints [i.e., God's holy people]. 4) For certain men have secretly infiltrated [your ranks]; they are men who had been written about long ago that they should be judged [and condemned] for perverting the unearned favor of our God into [a license for] living unrestrained, indecent lives, and who deny [the identity and work of] our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

5) But, I want to remind you, [even] though you already know the stories about how the Lord delivered His people from Egyptian [bondage], and then [later] destroyed those who did not believe [in Him]. 6) And angels, who did not remain within [the bounds of] their proper authority, but left their own realm, God has kept in perpetual bondage, under [thick] darkness, awaiting judgment on the Great Day [when they will be punished]. 7) So also, in a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah, and their surrounding towns, which had abandoned themselves to sexual immorality and [sexually] perverted behavior, serve as an example [of people] who [will] suffer the punishment of never ending fire.

8) In the same way, these people have dreams of committing physically corruptive practices; they reject authority over them [i.e., by both God and men], and speak against glorious [i.e., heavenly] beings. 9) But, when the ruling angel Michael disputed with the devil over [the final disposal of] the body of Moses, [even] he did not dare to bring derogatory charges against him [i.e., the devil], but said,

"May the Lord rebuke you." [Note: Some suggest that this account appeared in an apocryphal book, possibly "The Assumption of Moses"]. **10)** But these people [i.e., the "certain men" of verse 4] speak against whatever they do not understand, and what they do understand naturally, the way animals do, proves to be their ruination. **11)** It is too bad for these people, for they have followed the example of Cain [the murderer]; for the sake of money they have rushed into the [same] error as Balaam committed. [See Num. 25:1-5; 31:16]; they [will] perish [spiritually] for having rebelled [against God] like Korah did. [See Num. 16:1-3, 31-35].

12) These people are like rotten spots [contaminating the food] at your love feasts, while they gorge themselves without fear [i.e., unashamed of their selfish indulgence]. [Note: This passage may mean "like selfish shepherds, looking out only for themselves, they eat the grain set out for the animals"]. They are like clouds that blow over without producing rain; [they are like] trees in the fall that do not produce any fruit and have been uprooted, [thus] being dead twice [i.e., fruitless and rootless]. **13)** [They are like] raging ocean waves, whose shameful actions bubble up like foam. [They are like] shooting stars [whose light quickly goes out], for whom total darkness has been reserved forever.

14) And it was also prophesied about [these] people by Enoch, the seventh [descendant] of Adam [Gen. 5:18-24], who said, "Look, the Lord came with thousands upon thousands [Note: The Greek uses the plural form of "myriad," which means 10,000] of His holy ones [i.e., angels], **15)** to bring judgment upon all [such people], and to convict every person of their ungodly behavior, which they have wickedly committed, and of all the evil things that [such] ungodly sinners have spoken against God." **16)** These people are grippers and complainers, living according to their own [evil] desires, whose mouths speak boastfully, and who show partiality [toward certain people] to gain some advantage.

17) But you dearly loved ones, you should remember the message that was previously told to you by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, **18)** for they were saying to you people, "In the last times [See I John 2:18; Heb. 1:1-2] there will be mockers [arise], who will live according to their [own] ungodly desires." **19)** These are people who cause divisions [among God's people]; they follow their natural inclinations [i.e., worldly principles], for they do not have the Holy Spirit [in their lives].

20) But, you dearly loved ones, build yourselves up [spiritually] on [the foundation of] your most sacred faith; pray in [the power of] the Holy Spirit. **21)** Keep yourselves in God's love [i.e., continue to love God], as you look forward to [receiving] the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, [who will grant you] never ending life. **22)** And you should show pity toward some people because they have doubts [regarding spiritual matters]; **23)** you should save others [from hell, as though you were] snatching them out of the fire. And you should show pity toward some people, [coupled] with a fear [of the consequences of sin], hating the clothing contaminated by a physical sore. [i.e., hating sin so much that it should be avoided at all costs].

24) Now, may there be honor and majesty and power to God, who is able to guard you people from stumbling [and falling away from Him, See Gal. 5:4], and [who is able] to place you before His glorious presence without any [moral] blemish, but with great joy. **25)** [May these qualities be attributed] to the only God and our Savior, through the [person and work of] Jesus Christ our Lord, before [the beginning of] time [as well as] now and forever. May it be so.

REVELATION

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This is the record of] the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave [Him] to show to His servants. [It contains] the things which were soon to happen, and Christ sent His angel [i.e., messenger] to inform His servant, [the apostle] John, [about them].

2) [So], John testified concerning everything he saw of God's message and Jesus Christ's testimony [of it].

3) The person who reads this [book] and those who listen to the words of this prophecy and who obey what is written in it are blessed, for the time [when some of it will occur] is near. [See verse 1].

4) [This book is from] John [and is being sent] to the seven churches that are in Asia [Note: This refers to the province of Asia Minor, a part of present-day Turkey]. May there be unearned favor and peace to you from God, the One who is [in the present], who was [in the past] and who will come [in the future], and from the seven spirits that are in front of God's throne [Note: Because the number "seven" was regarded as the number of perfection by the Jews, it is thought that this refers to the Holy Spirit]. 5) [It is also] from Jesus Christ, who is the Faithful Witness [to the truth], the Firstborn from the dead [i.e., the first One raised never to die again], the Ruler of the kings of the world.

5)-6) May there be honor and power forever and ever to Christ, who loved us and released us from our sins by His blood [Note: Some manuscripts say "washed us" since the two words are spelled almost alike]. 6) And He made us to be a kingdom [See 5:10] and priests [See I Pet. 2:5, 9] for [serving] His God and Father. May it be so. 7) Look, He [i.e., Jesus] is coming with [i.e., "on"] the clouds! And [then] every eye will see Him, including those who pierced Him, and all the peoples of the earth will grieve because of Him [i.e., because of how they had treated Him]. So it will be. May it be so.

8) "I am the Alpha and the Omega" [Note: These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, and indicate "the beginning and the end" See 21:6], says the Lord God Almighty, who is [in the present], and who was [in the past] and who will come [in the future].

9) I [am] John, your brother who participates with you in the suffering and kingdom and endurance [which we experience] in [fellowship with] Jesus. I was on the island called Patmos for [preaching] God's message and for testifying about Jesus. [Note: Patmos was located in the Aegean Sea between present-day Greece and Turkey]. 10) I was in [i.e., under the influence of] the Holy Spirit on the Lord's day [i.e., Sunday], when I heard behind me a loud voice, like a trumpet, 11) saying, "Write down in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicia" [Note: These seven congregations were all located in western Asia Minor].

12) And I turned to see [whose] voice was speaking to me. And when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, 13) and in the middle of the lampstands I saw someone [who looked] like a son of man [i.e., Jesus. See verses 17-18]. He was dressed in a robe that reached down to His feet and He had a golden sash around His chest. 14) And His head and hair [i.e., probably meaning the hairs of His head] were as white as wool, or as snow, and His eyes were like flaming fire. 15) And His feet were like shiny brass, [glowing] as when it is being refined in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of much rushing water. 16) And He had seven stars in His right hand [See verse 20], and a sharp, double-edged sword came out of His mouth. And His face [shone] as the sun, shining in [all] its brilliance. 17) And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as [though I were] dead. And He placed His right hand on me and said, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last, 18) and the Living One. I was dead, and see, I am [now] alive forever and ever! And I possess the keys of death and of the unseen place of departed spirits.

19) "So, write down the things that you have seen, and the things now going on, and the things that will happen later on. 20) The secret of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and the seven golden lampstands [is this]: The seven stars are the angels [i.e., messengers] of the seven churches. And the seven lampstands are the seven churches."

CHAPTER TWO

1) "Write [this] to the angel [i.e., the messenger] of the

church at Ephesus [Note: These "messengers," (verses 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14) are thought by some to be evangelists]: These things are the words of the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: **2)** I know about your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. [I know] that you cannot tolerate wicked men and that you have tested those who call themselves apostles, but really are not, and found them to be liars. **3)** And you have persevered and endured [suffering] for my name's sake [i.e., in my service] and [yet] have not grown weary.

4) "But, this is what I have against you, that you have forsaken your first love [i.e., love for Christ and His church]. **5)** So, remember where you have fallen from and repent [i.e., change you hearts and lives] and do the things you did at first [i.e., when you were first converted], or else I will come and remove your lampstand from its place [i.e., I will not permit the congregation to survive], unless you repent. **6)** But you have this [in your favor]: You hate the [evil] deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate [Note: These people were probably followers of someone named Nicolas and were known to be false teachers. See verse 15].

7) "The person who has an ear should listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches. To the person who has victory [in the Christian life] I will give [the opportunity] to eat from the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God." [Note: "Paradise" is equivalent to heaven. See II Cor. 12:4].

8) "And write [this] to the angel of the church at Smyrna: These things are the words of the First and the Last, who was dead, but has come [back] to life i.e., Jesus], **9)** "I know [about] your suffering and your poverty (but you are [really] rich), and the slander of those who say they are Jews, though they [really] are not, but are a synagogue of Satan [i.e., they claimed to be an assembly of God's people, but in reality were serving Satan]. **10)** Do not be afraid of the things you are about to suffer. [For] look, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, so that you may be tested, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. [But], you should be faithful [to God] even to the point of dying [for Him], and I will give you the crown of [never ending] life.

11) "The person who has an ear should listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches. The person who has victory [in the Christian life] will not be harmed at all by the second death [i.e.,

the lake of fire. See 21:8]."

12) "And write [this] to the angel of the church at Pergamum: These are the words of Him who has the sharp double-edged sword: 13) I know where you are living; [it is] where Satan's throne is. And [I know] that you are holding on firmly to my name, and did not deny [your] faith in me, even in the days of my faithful witness Antipas [Note: The Greek word here for witness is "martyr"], who was killed there where you are, where Satan lives.

14) "But I have a few things against you because you have people there [in the church] who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to place a stumblingblock in front of the Israelites, [causing them] to eat food sacrificed to idols and to be sexually immoral [See Num. 23-24]. 15) And in the same way, you also have some people [there] who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans [see verse 6]. 16) So, repent, or I will come to you quickly and will attack those people with the sword of my mouth.

17) "The person who has an ear should listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches. To the person who has victory [in the Christian life] I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will [also] give him a white stone with a new name written on it, which no one understands, except the one who receives it."

18) "And write [this] to the angel of the church at Thyatira: These are the words of the Son of God, who has eyes like flaming fire and feet like shiny brass: 19) I know about your deeds, your love, your faith, your service and your endurance, and that your most recent deeds are more numerous than when you first began [your Christian lives]. 20) "But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman [named] Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. She teaches and deceives my servants into [practicing] sexual immorality and into eating things sacrificed to idols. 21) And I gave her time to repent, but she refused to repent of her sexual immorality. 22) Listen, I will throw her, and those who commit sexual unfaithfulness with her, into a bed where they will experience terrible suffering unless they repent of her [or, their] practices. 23) And I will strike her children dead [or, "kill her children by some terrible calamity" See Ex. 5:3 LXX]. Then all the churches will know that I am the One who searches the inmost being of people [Note: The Greek says, "searches the kidneys and hearts." In that day these internal organs stood for the inner thoughts, emotions, etc.]. And I will repay each one of you people according

to what you have done. 24) But I say to all the rest of you there in Thyatira who have not followed this [false] teaching [See verse 20], that is, those who have not known "the deep things of Satan," as people call them --- I will not burden you with anything else [i.e., beyond this problem about Jezebel's false teaching]. 25) Nevertheless, hold on firmly to what you [already] have [i.e., the qualities mentioned in verse 19] until I come [Note: This probably refers to coming with judgment on wrongdoing. See verse 16].

26) "And to the person who has victory [in the Christian life], and who continues to do what I want until the end [of his life], I will give him authority over the nations [Note: This probably refers to a spiritual reign with Christ during the Christian age. See 20:4]. 27) And he will rule them [as a shepherd] with a staff of iron, [and smash them] as the clay jars of a potter are broken to pieces [See Psa. 2:9]. [Note: Some translations begin verse 28 at this point]. [His authority will be] like that which I have received from my Father. 28) And I will give him the morning star [Note: Jesus is called "the Morning Star" in 22:16]. 29) The person who has an ear should listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches."

CHAPTER THREE

1) "And write [this] to the angel of the church at Sardis: These are the words of Him who has the seven Spirits of God [i.e., Jesus, who has the Holy Spirit] and the seven stars [i.e., the seven angels of the seven churches. See 1:20]: I know about your deeds, that you have a reputation for being [spiritually] alive, but you are [really] dead. 2) Wake up, and strengthen what remains [i.e., those few in the church who were trying to stay faithful], who are about to die. For I have not found [any] of your deeds to be complete before my God. 3) So, remember how you have received and heard the message [i.e., they had eagerly accepted the Gospel]; [now] obey it and repent. For if you do not become [spiritually] alert, I will come as a thief [i.e. unexpectedly] and you will not know the [exact] time that I will come upon you [in judgment. See 2:16, 25].

4) "But you have a few people [there] in Sardis who have not [spiritually] polluted their clothing, and they will walk with me in [robes of] white [i.e., probably now on earth as well as in heaven], for they are worthy. 5) The person who has victory [in the Christian life]

will be dressed like that, in white clothing, and I will not blot out his name from the book of life. And I will confess his name in front of my Father and His angels. 6) The person who has an ear should listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches."

7) "And write [this] to the angel of the church at Philadelphia: These are the words of Him who is holy and true, [and] who possesses the key [i.e., the power and authority] of King David, [and] who opens [a door] which no one will close, and who closes one that no one will open: 8) I know about your deeds. (See, I have placed before you an open door, which no one can close). [Note: This probably refers to their being assured of some unspecified opportunity]. [I know] that you have [only] a little bit of strength, but [in spite of that] you have obeyed my word and did not deny my name. 9) Look at those who belong to the synagogue of Satan [See 2:9]; they claim to be Jews, yet they are not, but are lying. Watch, I will make them come and bow down at your feet [in respect] and [they will] know that I have loved you. 10) Because you have obeyed my command to remain steadfast [in the face of difficult times], I will also keep you from [giving up when] the time of trial comes, which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those living on the earth. 11) "I am coming soon [or, suddenly. See 2:16, 25; 3:3]. Hold on firmly to what you have [i.e., opportunity, obedience, steadfastness, etc.] so that no one takes away your crown [See 2:10]. 12) I will make the person who has victory [in the Christian life] a pillar in the Temple of my God [i.e., probably a reference to heaven], and he will never leave it. And I will write on him the name of my God, the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which is coming down from heaven from my God [See 21:2, 10] and my own new name. 13) The person who has an ear should listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches."

14) "Write [this] to the angel of the church at Laodicia: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the source [or, ruler] of God's creation [See John 1:3; Heb. 1:1-2]: 15) I know about your deeds, that you are neither [spiritually] cold nor hot. I wish you were [either] cold or hot. 16) But since you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am about to vomit you out of my mouth. 17) For you are saying, 'I am wealthy; I have made plenty of money and do not need anything.' But you do not know that you are [spiritually] wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. 18) [Because of that], I advise you to buy from me gold, refined by

fire, so that you will become rich; and white clothing to wear, so that you can cover yourself and not be seen as shamefully naked; and eye drops for your eyes, so that you can see. [Note: The foregoing all refer to taking measures for becoming more spiritual].

19) "I rebuke and discipline those I love, so be earnest and repent. 20) Look, I am standing at [your] door and knocking; if anyone hears my voice [i.e., the sound of my knocking], and opens the door, I will [surely] come in to him and eat with him and he [will eat] with me. 21) The person who has victory [in the Christian life], I will grant him [the privilege of] sitting down with me on my throne, as I also had victory and sat down with my Father on His throne. 22) The person who has an ear should listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches."

CHAPTER FOUR

1) After [seeing all] these things, I looked, and there in heaven I saw [a vision of] an open door, and the voice I had first heard speaking to me like [the sound of] a trumpet [See 1:10], said, "Come up here [i.e., to heaven], and I will show you the things which must happen after these things [i.e., the things just revealed]." 2) Immediately, I was in [i.e., under the influence of] the Holy Spirit [See 1:10], and there before me was situated a throne in heaven, with Someone sitting on it [Note: From the following description, this appears to have been God]. 3) And He who was seated [on it] appeared like jasper [i.e., possibly diamond. See 21:11] and carnelian [i.e., possibly a brilliant red stone], and there was a rainbow, resembling an emerald, surrounding the throne. 4) And around God's throne there were twenty-four [other] thrones, with twenty-four elders sitting on them. [Note: These "elders" are generally considered to represent all the saved of both covenants. The number twenty-four is thought to be derived from the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles]. They were dressed in white clothing and had golden crowns on their heads. 5) And lightning flashes and [loud] sounds of rolling thunder came out of God's throne. And there were seven lighted torches burning in front of the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God [i.e., the Holy Spirit. See 1:4]. 6) And there was an ocean, as crystal-clear as glass, in front of the throne. And at the center, surrounding the throne were four living beings, covered with eyes in the front and back of them. [Note: In view of Isa. 6:1-3 and especially Eze. 10:20ff,

these "living beings" appear to be some special order of heavenly beings who inhabit the presence of God]. 7) And the first being was like a lion, the second one was like a calf, the third one had the face of a man and the fourth one was like a flying eagle. 8) And each of the four living beings had six wings [and] were covered with eyes all around them and [even] within them. And day and night they never stop saying, [Note: Some translations have "singing" here and at other places below], "Holy, holy, holy [is] the Lord God Almighty, who was [in the past] and who is [in the present] and who will come [in the future]." 9) And whenever the living beings give glory and honor and thanks to God, who sits on His throne and who lives forever and ever, 10) [then] the twenty-four elders fall down in front of Him who sits on His throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever. And they will throw their crowns in front of the throne and saying, 11) "Our Lord and our God, you deserve to receive the glory and the honor and the power for you created everything, and they exist because you wanted them to, so they were created."

CHAPTER FIVE

1) Then I saw in the right hand of God, who sat on His throne, a book with writing on the inside and on the back, and sealed with seven seals. 2) And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who deserves to break the seals on it and open the book?" [Note: This "book" was probably a rolled up scroll written on both sides, with wax seals keeping it from unrolling and its contents from being exposed]. 3) And no one in heaven, or on earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look inside of it. [Note: "Under the earth" may refer to the spirit world]. 4) And I cried bitterly because no one was found who deserved to open the book or to look inside of it. 5) Then one of the [twenty-four] elders said to me, "Do not cry; look, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of King David, has gained the victory, so He can break the seven seals on the book and open it." 6) Then I saw a Lamb, looking like it had been killed. He was standing in the center of the throne, surrounded by the four living beings and the [twenty-four] elders. He has seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God [i.e., the Holy Spirit, See 1:4], sent throughout the entire earth. 7) And the Lamb came and took the book from the right hand of God, who sat on His throne. 8) And when He had taken the

book, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down in front of the Lamb [i.e., to worship Him]. Each one of them held [in his hands] a harp and a golden bowl full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. [See Psa. 141:2; Rev. 8:3-4]. 9) And they sang a new song [which went like this]: "You deserve to take the book and break the seals on it, for you were killed and, with your blood, you purchased people for God from every tribe and language and race and nation, 10) and you made them into a kingdom and a priesthood for [serving] our God, and they will rule on the earth."

11) Then I looked, and heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living beings and elders. They numbered in the tens of thousands, and thousands and thousands [more]. [Note: The Greek says "myriads of myriads"]. 12) They were saying in a loud voice [See Note at 4:8], "The Lamb, who was killed, deserves to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and splendor and praise."

13) And I heard every creature in heaven, on the earth, under the earth, on the ocean and everything in them, saying [See Note at 4:8], "May there be praise and honor and splendor and power forever and ever, to God who sits on His throne and to the Lamb." 14) And the four living beings said, May it be so." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

CHAPTER SIX

1) And I watched while the Lamb broke open one of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living beings saying, in a thunderous voice [to the one on the white horse?], "Come [out]." 2) So, I looked, and before me [stood] a white horse, and the man riding on it had a bow. And he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror [going out] to conquer [someone].

3) And when the Lamb broke open the second seal, I heard the second living being saying [to the one on the red horse?], "Come [out]." 4) Then another horse came out; it was a red one, and the man riding on it was given [the ability] to take peace from the earth so that people would kill one another. And he was given a large sword.

5) And when the Lamb broke open the third seal, I heard the third living being saying [to the one on the black horse?], "Come [out]." So, I looked and before me [stood] a black horse, and the man

riding on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 6) And I heard what sounded like a voice coming from among the four living beings, saying, "A quart [measure] of wheat sells for a day's pay [Note: This amount would be \$60-\$84 in 1994, based on one day of a farm laborer's wages. See Matt. 20:2]; three quart measures of barley sell for a day's pay; but do not damage the [olive] oil and wine [i.e., the orchards and vineyards].

7) And when the Lamb broke open the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living being saying [to the one on the pale green horse?], "Come [out]." 8) So, I looked and before me [stood] a pale green horse, and the name of the man riding on it was "Death," and the unseen place of departed spirits followed along behind him. And they were [both] given authority over one fourth of the earth, to kill people with swords, with famine, with terrible judgments and by wild animals of the earth.

9) And when the Lamb broke open the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed for [believing and preaching] God's message, and for the testimony [about Jesus] which they had maintained. 10) And they called out with a loud voice, "How long, holy and true Master, [will it be] before you judge the people living on earth and take revenge on them for [shedding] our blood?" 11) And a white robe was given to each one of them, and they were told to rest a little while longer, until the [full] number of their fellow servants and their brothers would be killed like they were.

12) Then I looked as the Lamb broke open the sixth seal, and there [I saw] a great earthquake; the sun turned as black as sackcloth made out of [goat] hair, and the entire moon turned [as red] as blood. 13) And the stars in the sky fell to earth, like a fig tree dropping its unripe figs when shaken by a strong wind. 14) And the sky disappeared like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. 15) And the kings of the earth, the princes, the military commanders, the rich people, the influential people and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among mountain ledges. 16) And they called out to the mountains, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of God, who sits on His throne, and from the anger of the Lamb. For the terrible day of their anger has come, and who will be able to survive it?"

CHAPTER SEVEN

1) After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth. They were holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind would blow on the earth, on the ocean or on any tree. 2) And I saw another angel coming up from the east; he held the seal of the living God. [Note: This "seal" was a mark of identification or ownership]. And he called out with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given [the power] to harm the land and the ocean, 3) saying, "Do not harm the land, or the ocean, or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God [with a mark] on their foreheads." 4) Then I heard the number of those who were sealed. [It was] one hundred forty-four thousand from every tribe of the Israelites [Note: This could refer to Christians of Jewish descent]: 5) There were twelve thousand sealed from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand from Reuben, twelve thousand from Gad, 6) twelve thousand from Asher, twelve thousand from Naphtali, twelve thousand from Manasseh, 7) twelve thousand from Simeon, twelve thousand from Levi, twelve thousand from Issachar, 8) twelve thousand from Zebulun, twelve thousand from Joseph and twelve thousand from Benjamin.

9) After seeing [all] these things, I looked and there [I saw] a huge crowd, which no one could count, from every nation, and tribe, and race, and language group standing in front of the throne [of God] and in front of the Lamb. They were dressed in white robes and had palm tree branches in their hands. 10) And they called out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation comes from [or, "belongs to"] our God, who sits on His throne, and from [or, "to"] the Lamb." 11) And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the [twenty-four] elders and the four living beings. And they fell down on their faces in front of the throne and worshiped God, 12) saying, [See Note at 4:8], "May it be so: May there be praise and splendor and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and strength to our God forever and ever. May it be so."

13) Then one of the [twenty-four] elders asked me, "Who are these ones dressed in white robes, and where did they come from?" 14) And I answered him, "Sir, [surely] you know." And he said to me, "These are the people who have come through the terrible persecution, and they have washed their robes and made them white

with the blood of the Lamb. 15) So, [now] they are in front of God's throne and they are serving Him day and night in His Temple. And He who sits on His throne will spread His tent over them [i.e., He will protect them]. 16) They will not be hungry anymore, nor will they get thirsty anymore. The sun will not beat down on them, nor will they become scorched by the heat. 17) For the Lamb, who is at the center of the throne, will be their Shepherd and will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

CHAPTER EIGHT

1) Then when the Lamb broke open the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

2) And I saw the seven angels who were standing in front of God, and they were given seven trumpets.

3) Then another angel, who held a golden incense holder, came and stood at the Altar. He was given a quantity of incense to add to the prayers of all the saints [as an offering] on the golden Altar, which was in front of the throne. 4) And the smoke of the [burning] incense, [mingled] with the prayers of the saints, ascended from [the incense holder in] the angel's hand up to the presence of God. 5) Then the angel took the incense holder and filled it with hot coals from the Altar and threw it to the earth. [Immediately] there was [heard] rolling thunder, and lightning flashes [were seen] and an earthquake [was felt].

6) And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

7) [When] the first trumpet sounded [I saw] hail and fire, mingled with blood, being hurled down onto the earth. And one third of it was burned up, and one third of the trees were burned up and all the green grass was [also] burned up.

8) [When] the second angel sounded its trumpet [I saw] what seemed like a huge mountain, ablaze with fire, being thrown into the ocean. And one third of the ocean turned to blood, 9) and one third of [all] living sea creatures died, and one third of [all] ships were destroyed.

10) [When] the third angel sounded its trumpet [I saw] a huge star, like a flaming torch, falling from heaven. It fell on one third of

the rivers and on the springs of water. 11) And the star was called "Wormwood" [Note: The Greek word here means "bitter," See Lam. 3:15 ASV], and one third of the waters became wormwood [i.e., bitter], and many people died from the waters because they had become bitter.

12) [When] the fourth angel sounded its trumpet [I saw] one third of the sun, one third of the moon, and one third of the stars being struck, so that one third [of their light] would become darkened. So, the daytime had [only] one third of its [normal] light, and the nighttime was the same way.

13) And as I looked, I heard an eagle flying in midair, saying in a loud voice, "It is bad, very bad, awful bad for those people who live on earth, because of the sound of the trumpets of the remaining three angels!" [i.e., because of the messages they will deliver].

CHAPTER NINE

1) [When] the fifth angel sounded its trumpet, I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. And the key to the shaft leading to the deep pit [Note: This is thought to be the place where the devil and his demons live] was given to him. 2) And the fallen star opened the shaft leading to the deep pit and smoke drifted up from the shaft like smoke from a huge furnace. And the sun and the sky were darkened by the smoke from the shaft. 3) And locusts swarmed down out of the smoke to earth and they were given power like scorpions on earth have. 4) And they were told not to harm the grass on earth, or any greenery, or any tree, but only those people who did not have God's seal on their foreheads. 5) And the locusts were not given the power to kill these people, but [only] to torture them for five months. And the torment they would inflict was like a scorpion stinging a person. 6) And in those days people will be looking for death, but they will not find it; and they will want to die, but death will elude them.

7) And the locusts looked like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads [they wore] what appeared to be golden crowns, and their faces looked like the faces of human beings. 8) And they had hair like women and teeth like lions. 9) Their chests were covered with armor plate made of iron, and their wings sounded like the noise of many horse-drawn chariots rushing to battle. 10) And they had tails like scorpions with stingers, and in their tails they had the power

to inflict harm upon people for five months. 11) They had a king over them who was the angel of the deep pit [See verses 1-2]. His name in Hebrew was "*Abaddon*," and in Greek it was "*Apollyon*" [Note: These words both mean "Destroyer"].

12) The first Calamity is over; look, two more calamities are yet to come.

13) And the sixth angel sounded its trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns [i.e., corners] of the golden Altar, which is in front of God. 14) It said to the sixth angel with the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are tied up at the great Euphrates River." 15) And the four angels who had been ready for this hour and day and month and year were [now] released to kill one third of mankind. 16) And the armies of horsemen numbered two hundred million. I was told how many there were. 17) And this is how the horses and their riders looked in the vision: They had on their chests fire-[red], [smoke]-blue and sulphur-[yellow] armor plate, and the horses' heads were like lions' heads. And fire, smoke and sulphur proceeded out of their mouths. 18) One third of mankind was killed by these three plagues --- the fire, the smoke and the sulphur, which proceeded out of the horses' mouths. 19) For the power of the horses [to kill] is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like snakes that have heads with which to harm people.

20) And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, [still] did not repent of what they had made with their hands [i.e., their idolatry]. They did not stop worshiping demons, and gold, silver, brass, stone and wooden idols, which can neither see, nor hear nor walk. 21) And they refused to repent of their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality and their thievery.

CHAPTER TEN

1) And I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was covered by a cloud and there was a rainbow above his head. His face was like the sun and his legs were like pillars of fire. 2) He held in his hand a little book [i.e., scroll] which was open. And he placed his right foot on the ocean and his left foot on the land, 3) and he called out in a loud voice, like a roaring lion. And when he shouted, the seven thunders responded to the voice [of the angel]. [Note: These "seven thunders" have not been previously mentioned]. 4) And when the

seven thunders spoke [words], I started to write down [what the voices said], but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have [just] said, and do not write them down."

5) And the angel I saw standing on the ocean and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven 6) and took an oath to God, who lives forever and ever, and who created heaven and earth and [all] the things in them, and the ocean and [all] the things in it [saying], "There will be no further delay [i.e., before God's purposes are fulfilled]. 7) But in the days when the seventh angel is ready to sound his trumpet, then the secret plan of God will be accomplished, just as He [had] announced to His servants the prophets."

8) Then the voice which I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go [and] take the open book [being held] in the hand of the angel [See verse 2], who is standing on the ocean and on the land." 9) So, I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it and eat it; it will be sweet as honey to your taste, but will cause you to have a sour stomach." 10) So, I took the little book from the angel's hand and ate it. And [sure enough], it was sweet as honey to my taste, but after eating it, it gave me a sour stomach. 11) And they said to me [Note: The plural "they" may mean simply "it was told to me"], "You must prophesy again about many races, and nations, and language groups and kings."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) Then there was given to me a measuring stick that looked like a [tree] branch. I was told [Note: Neither the giver nor the speaker are identified], "Get up and measure the Temple of God, and the Altar and [count] those who worship there, 2) but do not include the court on the outside of the Temple in your measurements, because it has been given to the [unconverted] Gentiles. And they will trample underfoot the holy city [i.e., Jerusalem? See 21:10] for forty-two months. 3) And I will give [authority] to my two witnesses and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, wearing sackcloth" [i.e., a black, coarse cloth made of goat's hair]. 4) These [two witnesses] are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand in front of the Lord of the earth. 5) And if anyone wants to harm them, fire will come out of their mouths and consume their enemies. And if anyone tries to harm them, he must be killed in the same way. 6) These witnesses have the

authority to shut the sky up so that it does not rain during the time they are prophesying. And they have the authority to turn the waters into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague whenever they want to.

7) And when they have completed their testimony, the beast that comes up from the pit [See 13:1ff; 17:3,7] will wage war against them, and overpower and kill them. 8) And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city [Note: See the following passages on this "great city," 14:8; 16:19; 17:5,18; 18:2,10,16,18,19,21] where the Lord was crucified, which is spiritually called Sodom, or Egypt. 9) And people from among the races and tribes and language groups and nations will gaze at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and they will not permit their bodies to be buried. 10) And those people living on the earth will be glad over the death of them [i.e., the two witnesses. See verse 3], and they will celebrate by sending gifts to one another, because these two prophets had tormented those living on earth.

11) And after three and a half days, God breathed life into them and they stood up on their feet, and the people who saw them became terrified. 12) Then the two witnesses/prophets heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." So, they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. 13) At that very hour a severe earthquake occurred and one tenth of the city [See verse 8] was destroyed; and seven thousand persons were killed by the earthquake; and everyone else was terrified and gave honor to the God of heaven.

14) The second Calamity is over; look, the third one is coming soon.

15) Then the seventh angel sounded its trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord [i.e., God] and of His Christ, and He will rule forever and ever." 16) And the twenty-four elders, who sit in front of God on their thrones, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17) saying, "We thank you, O Lord God Almighty, who exists [in the present] and who existed [in the past], because you have taken your great power and have begun to rule. 18) And the nations were enraged, but your wrath has come [anyway]. The time has come for the dead to be judged and for your servants the prophets to receive their reward, [along with] the saints and [both] the insignificant and important ones who revere your name. [It is also time] to destroy

those who destroy the earth."

19) Then God's Temple in heaven was opened, and inside of it was seen the Chest containing God's Agreement [i.e., between Him and Israel]. [Immediately] there came lightning flashes, [loud] sounds, rumbling thunder, an earthquake and a severe hailstorm.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1) Then a great [supernatural] sign appeared in heaven. [It was that of] a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet. On her head was a crown with twelve stars. 2) She was pregnant, and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. 3) And another [supernatural] sign was seen in heaven; it was a huge red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and on each of his seven heads was a crown. 4) And his tail swept away one third of the stars of the sky and threw them to earth. And the dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he could eat her child as soon as it was born. 5) Then she gave birth to a baby boy, a son who will rule all the nations with an iron staff. And her child was snatched away to God and His throne. 6) Then the woman ran away to the desert, to a place prepared for her by God, where they could care for her for 1,260 days. [Note: The plural "they" here simply means "she would be cared for" See 10:11].

7) Then there was a war in heaven. Michael [See Dan. 10:13; 12:1; Jude 9] and his angels waged war against the dragon [See verse 9]; and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8) But they did not win and so lost their place in heaven. 9) Then the great dragon was thrown out [of heaven]; he is the snake from ancient times who is [also] called "the Devil," and "Satan," the deceiver of the entire world. He was thrown down to earth along with his angels.

10) And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "The salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ, have [all] now come. For the one who accuses our brothers in front of God day and night has been thrown out [of heaven]. 11) And they [i.e., the brothers. See 6:9-11] gained the victory over Satan by the blood of the Lamb, and by [remaining true to] the message of their testimony. And they did not love their lives [so much that they refused] to die [for their faith]. 12) So, rejoice, you heavens and you who live there. It is too bad for the earth and for the ocean, because

the devil has gone down to you with great rage, knowing that he has [only] a short time left."

13) And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to earth, he persecuted the woman who had given birth to a son. 14) And the woman was given the two wings of a large eagle so she could fly to her place in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, and times and half a time, from the presence of the snake [i.e., for three and one half years. See 11:2; 12:6]. 15) Then the snake spewed a torrent of water out of his mouth after the woman so that she would be swept away by the torrent. 16) But the earth helped the woman by opening up its mouth and swallowing the torrent of water which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17) Then the dragon became enraged at the woman and went away to wage war against the rest of the woman's offspring, who obey God's commandments and who remain true to their testimony about Jesus. 18) Then the dragon stood on the seashore. [Note: Some manuscripts say, "I stood"].

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) And I saw a beast coming up out of the ocean. It had ten horns and seven heads, and [it had] ten crowns on his horns and on each head there was a blasphemous name [i.e., a name that slandered God]. 2) And the beast I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like a bear's, and his mouth like a lion's. And the dragon gave him his power, his throne and his great authority. 3) And one of the beast's heads looked like it had been fatally wounded, but the wound healed and the entire world was amazed and followed after him. 4) And they [all] worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast. And they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast?" and "Who is able to wage war against him?"

5) And the beast was given [by the dragon?] a mouth for making proud claims and [speaking] blasphemous words, and the authority to act for forty-two months [See 11:2; 12:6]. 6) And he opened his mouth to speak slanderous words against God and against His name and His Tabernacle, that is, those living in heaven. 7) And he was given [the power] to wage war against the saints [i.e., God's holy people] and to conquer them; and he was given authority over every tribe, race, language group and nation. 8) And everyone who

lives on earth will worship the beast; [even those] people whose names had not been recorded in the book of life belonging to the Lamb, who was killed [in prospect] from the creation of the world.

[Note: This sentence could also read "...not been recorded from the creation of the world in the book of life belonging to the Lamb who was killed"].

9) If anyone has an ear, he should listen [to this]. 10) If anyone goes [or "leads others"] into captivity, he will go into captivity [himself]; if anyone is killed [or "kills others"] with the sword, he will be killed with the sword [himself]. Here is [where] God's holy people [need] perseverance and faith.

11) Then I saw another [i.e., a second] beast coming up from the earth. He had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. 12) And he exercises all the authority of the first beast [See verse 1] in his presence [or, "on his behalf"]. And he forced the earth and those who lived on it to worship the first beast, whose [apparently] fatal wound had healed. 13) And he [i.e., this second beast] performs great [miraculous] signs, including making fire come down from heaven to earth in [full] view of people. 14) [And] by being given [power] to perform these signs in the sight of the [first] beast, he deceived the people on earth. He told them to make a statue to [honor] the [first] beast, who had been wounded by a sword and yet lived [through it]. 15) Now the [second] beast was given [the power] to give breath to the statue of the [first] beast, so that it could both speak and cause all those who refused to worship the statue of the [first] beast to be killed. 16) And this second beast forced everyone to be branded with a mark on their right hand and on their forehead --- insignificant and important people, rich and poor people, and free people and slaves --- 17) so that no one would be able to buy or sell things without having the mark, either the name of the [first] beast or the number of his name.

18) This calls for wisdom; the person who has understanding should calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a person. And his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1) And I looked, and there in front of me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him were one hundred and forty-four thousand persons, with the Lamb's name and His Father's name

written on their foreheads. 2) And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of much rushing water, and like the sound of loud thunder. And the sound I heard was like people playing their harps. 3) And they [i.e., the 144,000] were singing a new song in front of God's throne, and in front of the four living beings and the [twenty-four] elders. No one could learn [to sing] this song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand [See 7:4,9] who had been purchased from the earth. 4) These people are the ones who did not practice sexual immorality with women, for they were virgins [Note: This probably has reference to people who avoided idolatry]. These are people who followed the Lamb wherever He went. They were purchased from among mankind to be the firstfruits [devoted] to God and to the Lamb. 5) They were found not to be liars; [for] they were without just blame.

6) Then I saw another angel flying in mid heaven. He had eternal good news to proclaim to those who lived on the earth, and to every nation, tribe, language group and race. 7) And he said [to them] in a loud voice, "Fear God and honor Him, for the time has come for Him to judge people. Worship Him who made the heaven, the earth, the ocean and the springs of water."

8) Then [I saw] a second angel following [him]. He said, "Fallen! Great Babylon has fallen. She has forced all the nations to drink the wine of her passionate sexual immorality [Note: The word "passionate" here could also mean "angry"]."

9) Then a third angel followed them. He said in a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his statue, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10) he will also [have to] drink the wine of God's anger, as an undiluted mixture in the cup of His anger. And he will be tortured with burning sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11) And the smoke of their suffering will ascend forever and ever and there will not be any rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his statue and who receive the mark of his name." 12) Here is [where] God's holy people, who obey His commandments and the faith of Jesus, [need] perseverance.

13) Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write [this]: Those who are [now] dead, who died in [fellowship with] the Lord, are blessed from now on. Yes, says the Holy Spirit, they will rest from their work, for [the record of] their deeds will follow them [i.e., into the next life]."

14) And I looked, and there in front of me I saw a white cloud, and on the cloud was seated someone who looked like the Son of man [See Dan. 7:13]. He had a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. 15) Then another angel [i.e., the fourth] came out of the Temple, calling out with a loud voice to Him who was sitting on the cloud, "Use your sharp sickle to reap [a harvest] because it is harvest time, and the crop of the earth is ripe." 16) And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle onto the earth, and its crop was harvested.

17) Then another angel [i.e., the fifth] came out of the Temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. 18) Then another angel [i.e., the sixth] came out of the Altar. He had authority over [its] fire and he called out in a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle [i.e., the fifth angel] saying, "Use your sharp sickle to gather the clusters from the vines of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." 19) So, the angel swung his sickle to earth and gathered the [grapes from the] vines of the earth and threw them into the huge winepress of God's anger. 20) Then the [grapes in the] winepress were trampled on outside of the city and blood flowed out of the winepress as deep as the horses' bridles for a distance of one hundred and eighty-four [square] miles.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1) Then I saw another great and marvelous [supernatural] sign in heaven. There were seven angels that had the seven last judgments which would complete the wrath of God.

2) And I saw what seemed to be an ocean of glass, mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast, his statue and the number of his name. They were standing beside [or, "on"] the ocean of glass and held harps [given to them] by God. 3) And they were singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. [The words were], "Your deeds are great and marvelous, O Lord, God Almighty; your ways are just and true, O King of the nations [or, "ages"]. 4) O Lord, who will not fear [you] and honor your name, for only you are holy? [So], all the nations will come and worship in front of you, for your righteous deeds have been revealed."

5) Then after these things I looked and [saw] in heaven the

Temple [consisting] of the Tabernacle of the Testimony was opened up. [Note: This heavenly vision is described in language reminiscent of the Tabernacle of Moses' day]. 6) And out of the Temple there came the seven angels that had the seven plagues [i.e., judgments]. They were dressed in clean, bright linen [clothing] and they had golden sashes wrapped around their chests. 7) And one of the four living beings gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. 8) And the Temple was filled with smoke from the splendor and power of God, and no one could enter the Temple until the seven plagues [brought on] by the seven angels were completed.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1) Then I heard a loud voice from the Temple saying to the seven angels, "You [angels], go and pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath upon the earth."

2) So, the first [angel] went and poured out his bowl onto the earth and a terrible and painful sore broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue.

3) Then the second [angel] poured out his bowl into the ocean, making it turn into blood like that of a dead person, and every living thing in the ocean died.

4) And [then] the third [angel] poured out his bowl into the rivers and springs of water, and they turned into blood. 5) Then I heard the angel [in charge] of the waters saying, "You are just, [you] who are [in the present] and who were [in the past], O Holy One, because you have judged [that these things should happen]. 6) For they [i.e., the followers of the beast. See verse 2] have shed the blood of God's holy people and [their] prophets, and you have given them blood to drink because they deserved it [i.e., these persecutors deserved the punishment they received for shedding blood]. 7) And I heard [a voice from] the Altar saying, "Yes, O Lord, God Almighty, your judgments are true and just."

8) Then the fourth [angel] poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to burn people with [its] fire. 9) And people were seared by the intense heat, and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these judgments [i.e., the authority to inflict them], but they refused to repent and honor God. [See verse 2].

10) And the fifth [angel] poured out his bowl on the throne

of the [first] beast [See 13:2], and darkness fell over his kingdom. And they [See verse 2] chewed their tongues in agony, 11) and they cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores. But they [still] refused to repent of their [evil] deeds.

12) And the sixth [angel] poured out his bowl on the great Euphrates River and its water was dried up, so that the road would be prepared for the kings from the east [to travel on]. 13) And I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; [one was] coming out of the mouth of the dragon, [one] out of the mouth of the beast, and [one] out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14) For they are spirits of demons, which perform [supernatural] signs. These spirits go out to the kings of the whole world to assemble them for battle on the great day of Almighty God. 15) [Note: At this point the Lord's voice breaks into John's vision]. ("Look, I am coming like a thief. That person is happy who stays alert and is dressed [properly], so he does not appear naked and have to be shamefully exposed"). 16) So, the [demonic] spirits assembled the kings together at the place which is called "*Armageddon*" in Hebrew. [Note: "*Armageddon*" means "mountain of Megiddo" and was a site in northwestern Palestine where several decisive battles had been fought centuries earlier. See Judges 4,5,7].

17) Then the seventh [angel] poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the Temple from the throne [of God], saying, "It is over!" [i.e., the series of judgments have been completed]. 18) [At that moment] there were flashes of lightning, [loud] sounds of rolling thunder, and a severe earthquake, worse than any since mankind was on earth; it was a terrible earthquake. 19) And the great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations were destroyed. And God remembered the great Babylon and made her drink from the cup of wine of His fierce anger. 20) And every island disappeared and the mountains could not be found. 21) And huge hailstones, weighing about one hundred pounds each, fell on people from the sky, and they cursed God because of this plague of hailstones, for it was an extremely severe plague.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1) Then one of the seven angels, who had the seven bowls, came and spoke to me, saying, "Come [here]; I will show you the punishment [to fall] on the great prostitute who is situated on many

bodies of waters. 2) The kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality with her, and those who live on the earth became drunk from [drinking] the wine of her sexual immorality."

3) Then, under the power of the Holy Spirit, the angel transported me to a desert, and [there] I saw a woman sitting on a red beast. It was covered with names that cursed God and it had seven heads and ten horns. 4) And the woman was dressed in purple and red [clothing], and was adorned with gold [jewelry] and precious stones and pearls. In her hand she held a golden cup full of disgusting things and of the pollutions of her sexual immorality. 5) And on her forehead was written a mysterious [name], "The great Babylon, the mother of the prostitutes and the disgusting things of the earth." 6) And I saw that the woman was drunk on the blood of God's holy people and on the blood of those [who were killed] witnessing about Jesus.

And when I saw her I was greatly amazed. 7) Then the angel [See verse 1] said to me, "Why are you so amazed? I will explain to you the secret [meaning] of the woman and the beast with seven heads and ten horns that she is riding on. 8) The beast you saw once existed, but now does not, and [yet] is about to come up out of the pit and go to [his] destruction. And those people living on the earth, whose names have not been recorded in the book of life from the creation of the world, will be amazed when they see the beast, because he had once existed, but now does not, and yet will come [again].

9) "This calls for an understanding mind. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. They are [also] seven kings; 10) five have fallen, one continues [to rule], and the other one has not yet come. But when he comes, he must remain for [only] a short time. 11) And the beast that once existed, but now does not, is actually the eighth one [i.e., head/hill/king. See verse 9], and yet he belongs to the seven; and he will go to his destruction.

12) "And the ten horns you saw are ten kings, who have not received a kingdom yet, but for one hour they will receive authority as kings, along with the beast. 13) These kings have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. 14) These kings and the beast will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. And those who are called and chosen [by God], and who are faithful [to Him

will share the victory] with the Lamb."

15) Then the angel [See verses 1,7] said to me, "The waters you saw, on which the prostitute sits [See verse 1] are races, crowds, nations and language groups. 16) And the ten horns and the beast you saw will hate the prostitute and will take away everything from her, leaving her naked; they will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. 17) For God has placed on their hearts [the desire] to carry out His purpose, by agreeing to give their kingdom to the beast until God's words are fulfilled. 18) And the woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1) After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. 2) And he called out with a loud voice, saying, "Fallen! The great Babylon has fallen, and has become a place where demons live, and a haunt for every evil spirit and every filthy and obnoxious bird {{Some ancient manuscripts add "and every filthy and obnoxious animal"}}. 3) For all the nations have drunk [or, "have been forced to drink"] the wine of her passionate sexual immorality [See 14:8], and the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality with her and the [retail] merchants of the earth became rich from her excessive luxury."

4) Then I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you do not share in her sins, and so that you do not receive her plagues [i.e., judgments]. 5) For her sins have piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her evil deeds. 6) Give back to her the way [i.e., the kind of treatment] she has given back [to others], and repay her double for what she has done. Mix a double dose for her from her own cup. 7) Cause her as much torment and sorrow as she gave herself honor and luxurious living. For she is saying to herself, 'I sit as a queen; I am not a widow and I will never suffer grief.' 8) So, all at once her plagues [i.e., judgments] will fall upon her. [They will be] death and grief and famine. And she will be burned up with fire, for the Lord God who judges her, is mighty. 9) And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality with her, and indulged in luxurious living with her, will cry and mourn over her when they see the smoke of her burning [i.e., the city of

Babylon. See verse 2]. **10)** They will stand far away, out of fear over her torment [Note: They will keep their distance for fear of becoming involved in the torment themselves], saying, 'It is too bad for the great, strong city of Babylon! Your judgment has come in a single hour.'

11) "And the [wholesale] merchants of the earth cry and mourn over her, for no one buys their cargoes [of goods] anymore: **12)** goods made of gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, expensive linen, purple [cloth], silk and scarlet [cloth]. [No one buys their] scented wood products, their articles made from ivory and expensive woods [i.e., furniture], their articles of brass, iron and marble. **13)** [No one buys their] cinnamon, spices, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, [olive] oil, flour and wheat. [No one buys their] cattle, sheep, horses, wagons, or the bodies and souls [i.e., the very lives] of people [i.e., slaves used for all purposes].

14) "The [late summer] fruit that you [i.e., the people of Babylon] longed for is gone from you, and all of your luxurious and glamorous things have vanished from you, never to be found again. **15)** The store owners who sold these things and were made wealthy from her [i.e., from the prosperous trade with Babylon] will stand far away, out of fear over her [See verse 10], crying and mourning, **16)** saying, 'It is too bad for the great city that was dressed in expensive linen and purple and scarlet [clothing], and that was adorned with gold, precious stones and pearl [jewelry]! **17)** For in a single hour [all] such great wealth was wasted.' Then all the ships' captains [Note: This word is literally "pilots"], passengers, crewmen and others who work in the maritime shipping industry stood at a distance **18)** and called out as they watched the smoke of the burning [city], 'What city was ever as great as this one?' **19)** And they threw dust on their heads, and lamented and cried out loud, saying, 'It is too bad for the great city, from which all ocean shipping companies got rich on her wealth! For in a single hour she was wasted.' **20)** Be glad, heaven, and you saints, and you apostles, and you prophets, for God has brought judgment on her for you [i.e., for the way she treated you]."

21) Then a mighty angel picked up a rock the size of a huge millstone and threw it into the ocean, saying, "This is how the great city of Babylon will be violently thrown down and will never be found again. **22)** And the sound of harp-players and musicians and flute-players and trumpet-players will never be heard in you again. And no workers of any trade will be found in you again, and the

sound of a [flour] mill [grinding] will never be heard in you again. 23) And the light of a lamp will never shine in you again. And the voices of the groom and bride will never be heard in you again. For your [retail] merchants were the great men of the earth, and all the nations were deceived by your sorceries. 24) And the blood of the prophets and the saints and all [others] who were killed on earth was found in her."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

1) After these things I heard what sounded like the loud voices of a huge crowd in heaven, shouting, "*Hallelujah* [which means, "Praise God"]! Salvation and splendor and power belong to our God. 2) For His judgments are true and just; He has judged [i.e., condemned] the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her sexual immorality, and He has punished her for [shedding] the blood of His servants." 3) And again they shouted, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her [burning. See 18:18] ascends forever and ever."

4) Then the twenty-four elders and the four living beings fell down and worshiped God, who sits on His throne. They said, "May it be so, Hallelujah!"

5) Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, all of you [who are] His servants, you who are the least significant and [also] the most important ones, who revere Him."

6) Then I heard what sounded like the voices of a huge crowd, and the sound of much rushing water, and great rolling thunder. They shouted, "Hallelujah! For the Lord, our God Almighty rules. 7) We should rejoice and be extremely glad, and we should give honor to Him. For the time has come for the Lamb's marriage, and His bride has prepared herself [for the wedding]. 8) She was given expensive, bright, clean linen [clothing] to wear." (Now the expensive linen [clothing] represents the righteous deeds of the saints [i.e., God's holy people]).

9) Then the angel said to me [See 17:1; 18:1-2], "Write [this]: Those who are invited to the wedding reception of the Lamb are blessed." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God." 10) Then I fell down in front of him to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am [only] a fellow-servant with you and with your

brothers who hold onto the testimony about Jesus. You should worship God. For the testimony about Jesus is the spirit [i.e., the purpose, or source] of prophecy."

11) Then I saw heaven open, and there before me was a white horse whose rider was called "Faithful and True." And He [i.e., Christ] judges and wages war in a just way. 12) And His eyes are [like] blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns, and He has a name written [on Him] which is known only by Him. 13) And He is dressed in a robe that has been dipped in blood, and the name by which He is called is "The Word of God." 14) And the armies in heaven, dressed in expensive, white, clean linen, followed Him, [riding] on white horses. 15) And a sharp sword came out of His mouth, with which He would strike down the nations. And He will rule them with an iron staff and will trample on [the grapes of] God Almighty's winepress of anger. 16) And on His robe and His thigh was written the name, "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

17) Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he called out in a loud voice to all the birds that fly in midair, "Come and be assembled together for the great supper of God, 18) so that you can eat the flesh of kings, and military commanders, and strong [i.e., influential ?] people, and horses with their riders, and [you can eat] the flesh of all people, the least significant [as well as] the most important ones.

19) Then I saw the beast [See 13:1ff], and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled together to wage war against the One who was riding on the horse [i.e., Christ. See verse 11] and His army. 20) But the beast was captured, along with the false prophet [See 16:13], who performed [supernatural] signs in his presence. [He had performed these signs] to deceive those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his statue. [See 13:15-16]. The beast and the false prophet were both thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur. 21) Then the rest of them [i.e., the kings and their armies. Verse 19] were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the One riding the horse. And all the birds gorged on their flesh.

CHAPTER TWENTY

1) Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding

the key to the pit and a huge chain in his hand. 2) And he took hold of the dragon, that old snake, who is the devil or Satan, and chained him up for a thousand years. 3) He threw him into the pit, and closed it and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that time, he must be released for a short while.

4) Then I saw thrones, with individuals sitting on them who had been given [authority] to judge. And I [also] saw the souls of those who had been decapitated because they had testified about Jesus and [had proclaimed] the message of God. [They are] the ones who refused to worship the beast or his statue, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And these ones lived again and ruled with Christ for a thousand years. 5) (The rest of those who had died did not come [back] to life until the thousand years had ended). This is the first resurrection [from the dead]. 6) The person who shares in this first resurrection is blessed and holy [i.e., for being so dedicated to God]. The second death does not have power over these people, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will rule with Him for the thousand years.

7) And when the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison, 8) and he will [again] go out to deceive the nations which are [located] throughout the whole world --- Gog and Magog. [Note: Based on Eze. 35-40, it appears that these names are used here figuratively for all the forces of wickedness which are enemies of God]. Satan will assemble them together for battle, and they will be as numberless as the sand on the seashore. 9) And these [enemies of God] crossed the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people and the much-loved city [i.e., the church of God]. But fire came down from heaven and consumed them. 10) And the devil who [had] deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire, [burning] with sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet also are. [See 19:20]. And [there] these [enemies of God] will be tortured day and night forever and ever.

11) Then I saw a great, white throne and Him who was seated on it [i.e., probably Christ]. Earth and heaven fled from His presence and they were not found anywhere [again]. 12) And I saw dead people, the most important and the least significant ones, standing in front of the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life [Note: This refers to a record of those to whom God has granted never ending life]. And these dead people [i.e., who have now

been resurrected] were judged according to their deeds, based on what was recorded in the books. 13) The ocean gave up the dead [bodies] that were in it; and death and the unseen place of departed spirits [also] gave up the dead [bodies and spirits] that were in them. And every person was judged according to his deeds. 14) Then death and the unseen place of departed spirits were thrown into the lake of fire [i.e., after their spirits were reunited with some kind of a body]. This lake of fire is the second death. 15) And if any person's [name] was not found recorded in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, because the first heaven and the first earth [had] passed away, and there was no longer any ocean. 2) And I [also] saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as bride adorned for her husband. 3) And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look, the Tabernacle of God [i.e., God's presence] is with people and He will live with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be among them { {Some ancient manuscripts add "and will be their God"} }. 4) And He will wipe away all the tears from their eyes, and there will not be death anymore, or mourning, or crying, or pain anymore, for these old things have passed away."

5) Then the One who is seated on the throne [i.e., Christ, or God] said, "Listen, I am making everything new!" Then He said, "Write [this], because these words are trustworthy and true." 6) Then He said to me, "These things have already happened. [Note: These words express the certainty of what has been predicted in this book, even though not all the events had actually taken place yet]. I am the Alpha and the Omega [See note at 1:8], the beginning and the end. I will give the person who is [spiritually] thirsty [a drink] from the spring of water of life without his having to pay for it. 7) The person who has victory [in the Christian life] will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be my child. 8) But the place for cowards, and unbelievers, and disgusting people [i.e., because of their terrible sins], and murderers, and sexually immoral people, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, will be the lake that burns with fire and sulphur. This is the second death."

9) Then one of the seven angels who held the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues [i.e., judgments, See 15:1], came and spoke to me, saying, "Come here, [and] I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." 10) So, he transported me away in [i.e., under the influence of] the Holy Spirit, to a very high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. 11) It had the splendor of God [shining from it], and was as brilliant as a very precious stone, as crystal-clear as jasper. 12) It had a very high wall [around it], with twelve angels [stationed] at its twelve gates. The names written on the gates were those of the twelve tribes of the Israelites. 13) There were three gates on the east side [of the wall]; three gates on the north side; three gates on the south side; and three gates on the west side. 14) And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb [were inscribed on them].

15) And the angel who spoke to me [See verse 9] had a golden measuring stick with which to measure the city, its gates and its wall. 16) Now the city is laid out as a perfect square; its length is the same as its width. So, he measured the city with the stick [and found it to be] fifteen hundred miles each way; its length and width and height all being the same. 17) And he measured its wall [and found it to be] two hundred and sixteen feet [high], according to human measurements which the angel was using. 18) The material for the city's wall was jasper, and the city [itself] was made of pure gold, as clear as glass. 19) The foundation of the city's wall was decorated with all kinds of precious stones [Note: Not all of the following stones listed can be accurately identified today]. The first foundation stone was jasper [i.e., a bluish-colored stone]; the second was sapphire; the third was chalcedony [i.e., a translucent quartz of pale blue or gray]; the fourth was emerald; 20) the fifth was sardonyx [i.e., an orange-colored stone similar to chalcedony]; the sixth was sardius [i.e., a reddish-colored stone also called carnelian]; the seventh was chrysolite [i.e., a yellowish- or greenish-colored stone]; the eighth was beryl [i.e., a stone of bluish-green color]; the ninth was topaz [i.e., a yellow or bluish-yellow stone]; the tenth was chrysoprase [i.e., a stone of greenish-gold color]; the eleventh was jacinth [i.e., a stone of purple or reddish-blue color]; the twelfth was amethyst [i.e., a purple- or violet-colored stone]. 21) And the twelve gates were made of twelve pearls, with each gate being made of a single pearl. And the street of

the city was made of pure gold, as transparent as glass.

22) But I did not see a Temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the city's Temple. **23)** And the city does not need the sun or the moon to illuminate it, for the splendor of God provides the light for it, and its lamp is the Lamb. **24)** And [the saved people of] the nations will walk in the city's light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. **25)** And the gates of the city will never be closed during the daytime (for there will never be nighttime there). **26)** And they [i.e., the kings of the earth, Verse 24] will bring the splendor and honor of [the saved people of] the nations into the city. [Note: This verse may involve a slightly different idea from verse 24]. **27)** And there will never be anything [morally] unclean allowed to enter it, nor any person who practices disgusting behavior [i.e., probably such sins as sexual perversion], or [any person] who is a liar. But the only ones [allowed there] are those [whose names are] recorded in the Lamb's book of life.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1) Then the angel [See 21:9] showed me the river of the water of life. It was crystal-clear as it flowed out of the throne of God and the Lamb, **2)** and down the middle of the city's street. And on each side of the river stood the tree of life; it produced twelve crops of fruit, yielding a crop every month. And the leaves of the tree [served as medicine] for healing the nations. **3)** And there will no longer be any curse [in the city], and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there. And God's servants will serve Him, **4)** and they will see His face, and His name will be [written] on their foreheads. **5)** And it will never be nighttime there anymore; they will not need the light of a lamp or of the sun, for the Lord will give them light. And they [i.e., God's servants] will rule [with Christ, See 20:4] forever and ever.

6) Then the angel [See 21:9] said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His servants [i.e., through the apostle John] the things that must happen soon [See 1:1]. **7)** And listen, I [i.e., Christ] am coming quickly! The person who obeys the words of the prophecy of this book is blessed."

8) I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me. 9) But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am [only] a fellow-servant with you and with your brothers, the prophets, and with those who obey the words of this book. You should worship God."

10) Then the angel said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near [i.e., for the events of its prophecies to begin to happen]. 11) The person who is doing wrong should continue to do wrong [if he wants to]; and the person who is [morally] filthy should continue to be [morally] filthy [if he wants to]; and the person who does what is right should continue to do right [if he wants to]; and the person who is living a holy life should continue to live holy [if he wants to]."

12) "Listen," [says Jesus], "I am coming quickly! And my reward is with me to pay [back] every person for what he has done. 13) I am the Alpha and the Omega [See note at 1:8], the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

14) Those who wash their robes are blessed because [then] they will have the right to [eat from] the tree of life, and will [be able to] enter the city through the gates. 15) On the outside [of the city] are the dogs [Note: This probably refers to people who practiced sexual perversions. See Deut. 23:17] and the sorcerers, and the sexually immoral people, and the murderers, and the idolaters and every person who loves and practices falsehood.

16) "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you people about these things for [the benefit of] the churches [See 1:4]. I am the Root and the descendant of King David, the bright Morning Star."

17) And the Holy Spirit and the bride [i.e., the church. See 21:9] say, "Come!" And the person who hears [this] should say "Come." And the person who is [spiritually] thirsty should come; [and] whoever wants to should come and drink the water of life without having to pay for it.

18) I testify to every person who hears the words of the prophecy of this book [Note: This is probably Jesus speaking, but could possibly be John]: If anyone adds to these words, God will add to him the calamities described in this book. 19) And if anyone takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

20) The One who testifies about these things [i.e., Jesus] says, "Yes, I am coming soon." May this be so. Come [ahead] Lord Jesus!

21) May the unearned favor of the Lord Jesus be with all of **YOU**. [Note: Some ancient manuscripts say "with God's holy people"]. May it be so.

**TO COMMEMORATE
THE 500TH BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF
ANOTHER WILLIAM**

ERRORS

(SPELLING, OMISSIONS, ADDITIONS, CORRECTIONS, ETC.)

Page 8 - Add "in" between "placed" and "computer"

Page 259 - Verse 3 - "between His death on the cross and His resurrection"
should be "following His death on the cross [and resurrection]"

Page 309 - Verse 3 - "east" should be "west"

Page 352 - Verse 6 - "prophecy" should be "prophesy"

Page 525 - Verse 8 - Remove "a" between "and" and "humble"